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PARTICIPATING IN PLANNED SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES OF THE FUNDACION SAN ISIDRO IN COLOMBIA

BY

JAN BARRY GELFAND ©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF **MASTERS OF SCIENCE**

IN

RURAL SOCIOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF RURAL ECONOMY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1994

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Whereas for the philosophy of knowledge, the fundamental kind of rational learning is acquiring knowledge, for the philosophy of wisdom the fundamental kind of rational learning is learning how to live, how to see, to experience, to participate in and to create what is of value in existence.

Nicholas Maxwell

That a mass of men be led to think about the immediate reality in a united and coherent way is a more important and original "philisophical fact" than the discovery by a "genius" of a new truth which remains the patrimony of a small group of intellectuals.

Antonio Gramsci

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **PARTICIPATING IN PLANNED SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES OF THE FUNDACION SAN ISIDRO IN COLOMBIA** submitted by **JAN BARRY GELFAND** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN RURAL SOCIOLOGY**

DHARA S. GILL, SUPERVISOR

Eloise C. Murray

ELOISE C. MURRAY

David J. Whitson

DAVID WHITSON

Date: oct. 5, 1994

ABSTRACT

Community member participation is a key component of any planned social change process. The general assumption is that community members will better adopt a community development plan if they are involved in directing it. This, in turn, will increase the plan's chance for success. However, rarely does participation allow for community member control over the planning process. At most, there is a sharing of responsibilities rather than a sharing of power.

Using documentary data, participant observation, and individual and group interviews, this study describes and assesses the participatory practices of the Fundación San Isidro (FSI). The FSI is a Colombian non-governmental organization working with rural poor in the department of Boyacá situated in the northern part of the country.

The study compares three different models of community development: 1) the Self-Help model; 2) the Technical Assistance model; and 3) the Social Transformational model. The role of participation in these models is assessed as it relates to three variables: 1) community needs and objectives; 2) basic change strategies; and 3) community-worker relations. These three variables form the bases of the analytical framework used to assess the participatory practices at the FSI.

Basing their community development work on the Social Transformational model and through the extensive use of Participatory Research methods, FSI programs adhere to the tenets of community control over decision making, research and the development of action plans designed at changing the social structures which impoverish the rural poor of the region.

The study found that the practices of the FSI were focused on helping community members gain the skills and analysis needed to control their own social transformational development processes. The decision making and organizational structures of the FSI were designed around community inclusion. The study argues that the FSI community work practices demonstrate that community development models must recognize and help develop the potential all community members have to dictate their own development.

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Without the help, patience and support of many people, this research would not have been possible. It is through their guidance and friendship that I was able to learn so much about so many things. I can only hope that the completion of this work is some small token of thanks for what they have given me.

Community development is very important to me as is the right of every individual and group to be heard, respected and in control of their futures. The people in all the communities I visited in Boyacá and especially the members, promotores, and staff of the Fundación San Isidro, made me understand what it is for community members to build a vision of peace and justice and to stay on the slow road to change. They showed me warmth and friendship. They and the people from the Universidad Javeriana, who helped set up my research and gave me access to the vast amount of literature I needed, allowed me a glimpse into the most progressive forms of community development theory and practice I have known. It saddens me that this is born out of the injustice and oppression that they face. In spite of this, they still remembered how to laugh and to sing and to dance.

Anytime one is alone overseas the reliance on friends becomes that much more important. I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Luisa Carrisoza and to Ernesto Montoya, not only for their help in my research but for the warmth, kindness and fun we shared.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND FREQUENTLTY USED SPANISH TERMS

Acta - recording of what transpired at a meeting or workshop. More expansive than minutes of meetings

Asemblea - General Assembly or Board of Directors

Caja Agraria - the government credit institute set up to provide loans to the rural sector

Diagnóstico - an amplification of social analysis in that it not only looks at the social influences that affect people's lives but also focuses on historical, cultural, environmental and individual elements

DRI - Desarrollo Rural Integrado. In English, the Integrated Rural Development

Ecomienda - large land expanses (along with the populations living on them) given by the Spanish crown to the conquistadores (Spanish conquerors)

Ejido - cooperatively owned farming land set aside by the state or church

Formación - the process of consciousness raising

FSI - Fundación San Isidro

Hacienda - large privately owned farms usually living in a feudal relationship with campesinos (peasants)

IAMDP - Integrated Agricultural Marketing Development Project

Latifundio - large estates used for the growing of export crops

Mestizo - people of mixed Spanish and Indian blood

Minifundio - small family farms

Promotores Sociales - community development workers

RTD - Research and Training in Duitama Project

SH - Self-Help Model of community development

ST - Structural Transformational Model of community development

TA - Technical Assistance Model of community development

Tarea - an assignment or task to be completed

UJ - Pontificía Universidad Javeriana (Pontificate Javeriana University

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background

Since the United Nations declared the first Development Decade, a host of national and international agencies have initiated programs intended to assist the development of "underdeveloped" communities and countries. While these efforts began in an atmosphere brimming with the optimism of post-colonial nationalism and the hopes inspired by technological advances, the resulting gains have not alleviated the poverty and powerlessness of much of the world's population.

Until the beginning of the 1970s, the approaches to international development focused largely on an increase in the economic productivity of nations, with the assumption that a large Gross Domestic Product would benefit all elements of society (FAO, 1979).

Such strategies have clearly not met expectations. New perspectives, such as those proposed in the Program of Action adopted by the U.N. sponsored *World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development* in 1979, focused on the need to promote equity and people's participation in the development process, concluding that economic growth *per se* was not sufficient to promote development. This implies a sharing of economic and political power with the rural poor, as well as in the production and distribution systems of a society (Saouma, 1984).

A large majority of development scholars seem to agree with the need for a more equitable power distribution. However, there are significant socio-political implications of such structural changes which have not been fully addressed by the political powers in charge of development programs. Unless national power structures are modified, sustained development becomes a formidable task. In Latin America, it is the rural poor that occupy the lowest positions in the social and power structure (Eckholm, 1979). They participate little in the socio-economic decision-making processes which have direct effects on their lives. As a result, they often participate in organized militant action in an attempt to change those structures that perpetuate their exclusion from these processes and ultimately, social progress.

In response to organized social opposition, many governments, on the advice of international development agencies, have introduced community development programs designed to include community members. The assumption behind these initiatives is that the inclusion of people in the decision-making process will eventually contribute to the social and economic development of rural society and will therefore provide a socially stabilizing effect.

Rarely, however, have the targeted communities been active participants in the design and implementation of the development programs or projects of which they are to be the principle benefactors. Increasingly, stronger and more persuasive calls have been made for the integral participation of people as subjects in the process of creating and directing their own development. Theoretical and practical advances made by academics and community workers in these countries have resulted in more "home-made" development strategies designed to directly include those involved in their own development struggles. A crucial consideration, therefore, is not only recognizing the participative potential of community members but also the nature of this participation and the forms in which it takes place.

The researcher's experience working with community organizations in Colombia, South America provided both an opportunity and acted as a motivator for carrying out this research project. Personal experience working with a wide range of community organizations, both in Canada and in other countries, has shown that few utilize participatory practices in their work. It is necessary to understand what is meant by participation and how it transforms into practice.

The information and analysis presented in this thesis describes the efforts of one rural Colombian organization, the *Fundación San Isidro* (FSI) to adopt participatory community development practices. This case study provides an opportunity to reflect on the role of community members in community development and social change processes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The primary goal of community development is to help people improve their social and economic situations. It is concerned with public policies, governmental actions, economic activities, institution building, human resources development and other types of activities that not only affect people but are affected by them as well. It focuses on people as stimulators of social action processes and on the humanistic elements involved in change, and how such change contributes to social and economic well-being.

Participation occupies a central role in any discussion of community development. Defining participation, however, is still very problematic. As a theoretical concept and as a practical policy, participation is the source simultaneously of satisfaction and frustration, and of ambiguous interpretations (De Bal, 1989). The concept has become vague, meaning different things to different people and can be found equally in the development rhetoric of capitalists, socialists and others (Repo, 1977; Smith, 1982).

There is a tendency for theoretical studies of participation to refer to the practice as an attempt to achieve a redistribution of power, on the basis that a reduction in the differences in power between levels in society, or in organizations or groups, should be conducive to a more realistic implementation of democracy. As stated by Taruk:

> In any society, the haves are as powerful as the have-nots are powerless, so that perpetuation of power in the hands of a few will always result in the perpetuation of poverty among the majority of the people (Taruk, 1981:134)

In the development of structures designed to achieve increased levels of participation, the exercise often becomes the focus of a power struggle between those emphasizing the need for more participation and those who wish to reserve decision making to an élite, regardless of how that élite is derived or composed or at what political level it exists.

Participation has too often been utilized to serve predetermined ends, by those directing the participatory process and those who wish to maintain economic and social control. Often, those that espouse the need for participation do so only to the point that the participation does not interfere with existing structures.

However, even with the renewed call for citizen involvement, predominant community development paradigms and their resulting practices, have not transferred power from those controlling the process to those who are to benefit from it. These paradigms purport to actively solicit people's involvement but the very nature of their design and those who are working with them, preclude participation in power sharing. Participation is seen to be a sharing of responsibility for work and success of the programs and projects, rather than of sharing the power to make decisions or direct the community development work.

A wide range of barriers to participation exist resulting from a person's or community's economic, political, social, psychological or cultural situation or history. These barriers make meaningful participation difficult and act as justification for those who argue that it is impossible to involve any significant number of community members in the social change or planning process. It is, however, for these same reasons that participation must be promoted, because it is the lack of participation that, in part, has lead to this lack of involvement.

Borrowing from several authors Draper (as found in Baker et al, 1991:268) lists several reasons why people may be discouraged from participating in the planning process. Among these he cites:

1. the tendency to blame people for not being motivated to participate
2. the danger of dealing only with the visible power structure within a community
3. not being flexible enough to allow for unintended learning and outcomes
4. the actual or perceived threat that many feel toward changing the status quo
5. the influence of communication within and between systems
6. negative attitudes about the role of research and evaluation in social change
7. the inadequate dissemination and availability of knowledge and information
8. being politically naive about the capabilities or limitations of the electoral system and often being unaware of the degree of tolerance of political systems
9. an overconcern with present day issues, which discourages long-term, flexible planning and citizen participation
10. authoritarian and paternalistic attitudes about the capability of average citizens to become responsibly involved in social planning

11. a distrust of professionals by citizens and "practitioners"
12. the tendency of some organizations and institutions to lose sight of their "cliental" and to concentrate of perpetuating themselves

The majority of community development work done is unidirectional (i.e. from the top down), rather than of a collaborative nature. Information and skills are directed at communities rather than utilizing what exists locally within communities.

Participation in community development refers to the individual and collective action of people to become involved in, and improve their community. Brager (1987) suggests that we need to ask several questions regarding participation: Why, who, when and how should people participate? The answers to these critical questions do, in part, determine the quality and effect of any development process a community involves itself with. Citizen participation has become one of the most vital organizational issues in decision-making and community development.

There exist community development models that explicitly deal with the issue of participation and community control. The Social Transformational model and Participatory Research (PR) advocate the position that those people who are to be affected by decisions designed to improve their social and economic well being, should be the primary authors of those decisions. They have the right to participate and should maintain control over the process.

These perspectives are directed at the political and economic heart of prevailing capitalist structures and the community development practices that ensure the culture these structures have created, is perpetuated. They are concerned with creating structures whereby developing countries and their citizens can determine, plan and implement the types of community development programs that meet the needs they themselves have identified. The hope is that more people will participate, more action will result and less dependency on outside resources will be needed.

The *Fundación San Isidro* have, for over a decade, subscribed to this community development orientation. They attempt, through their structures and community development practices, to break this trend of top-down development by placing members at the centre of the work they do and in the decisions they make. They have implemented community development practices that, they believe, community members control, and that address the many barriers identified by Draper.

A description and examination of their community development ideology and practices, and the roles that community members play, may provide insights into the effectiveness and viability of the participatory community development theories and practices which guide their work. This thesis seeks to explore this subject.

1.3 Significance of the Problem

Throughout the developing world numerous examples of failed community development projects exist. Tractors lie rusting in fields and elaborate irrigation systems no longer work. Projects and actions have been carried out with little success or sustainability. In many cases, the communities involved have not only not benefited, but in many cases dependency on outside expertise, skills and money has been created.

In Colombia, in spite of massive rural-urban migration, the number of rural inhabitants is significant. Agriculture plays a crucial role in its' economy. However, the social organization of the agrarian structure has not permitted peasants to participate in the decision-making process associated with agriculture, nor share in the socio-economic benefits derived from agricultural production. They have always assumed a marginalized role within the broader Colombian social structure.

Under such a framework, the outcomes of the majority of community development initiatives tend to be analyzed and evaluated in economic terms. However, little attention has been given to the effect that the participation of community members may have in the political, economic and social outcomes of these projects. Projects are implemented, certain people benefit, but by and large the participation and benefit by rural peasants remains stagnant.

Nonetheless, scholars and community development practitioners continue to support and promote the benefits of participation. Brager (1987) claims that the health of a community can be measured, at least in part, by the existence of opportunities for participation in its institutions that are accessible to all its social and interest groups. Participation is indispensable to development, and the quality of that development is largely determined by the quality of participation (Goulet, 1989). Researchers and development workers must acknowledge and respond to these demands for participation.

The inclusion of community people in community development cannot be assumed to immediately result in an improvement in their economic situation. In fact the opposite may hold true, if such participation is not sanctioned by the local or national power structures. Key components which must be addressed is what is meant by participation, its nature and the degree to which people are involved.

Participation involves changing the structures of economic and political power, to the extent where people can openly have a share of that power, and influence directly the nature of changes to take place in the structure of society (Braverman, 1974). Strauss (1963) argues that no matter how participation is defined it is in effect a means of reducing power differences.

The requirement for participation by community members in work done by the FSI is evident in the way they make decisions, in the identification of community issues, in the determination of solutions to these issues, and in the implementation and evaluation of community development activities. It also forms an integral part of the training of *promotores sociales*[1].

The FSI uses as the point of departure for all their work, the tenet that through participatory practices the quality of life of community members will improve and by extension so will the region and ultimately, the country. The analysis provided through this study may provide some insights into future strategies for participation in community development and social change in Colombia as well as in other parts of the world.

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[1] community development workers

1.4 Definition of Study Objectives

Initially, I had hoped to focus this study on the participatory practices used in a particular multi-year project the FSI had completed in the last year. These objectives, based on a review of the organization, the above mentioned project as well as discussions with contact people, were determined while still in Canada. However, after arriving in the region and having time to assess these objectives in light of the current situation of the FSI, it was necessary to adapt the original research intention. Many of the community members who had been involved in the entire project had migrated or passed away making data collection problematic, necessitating a refocusing of the research and demonstrating the need for flexibility in identifying the objectives of the research.

This adaptation involved expanding the study to not only concentrate on the original project, but to include a wider range of newer projects of varying sizes. This by no means, 'watered down' the research, but rather enhanced the ability to study levels of participation and involvement in a wider range of situations. It also created an opportunity to look at changes in community development practices over time.

1.5 Objectives of the Thesis

The general objective of this study is to describe and analyze the participatory practices used by the FSI, in order to determine if the community work they do is, as the organization claims, participatory and community member controlled.

The specific objectives are:

1. to describe the community development philosophy, policies and strategies of the FSI;
2. to describe and analyze the nature and level of community member participation in the community development activities done by the FSI
3. to describe and analyze the training of the FSI *promotores* and the interaction between the *promotores* and community members;
4. to describe and analyze the evaluation and feedback process used by the FSI; and
5. to provide insights into the future role of participation in community development work

The role of participation in the Social Transformation model (ST) of community development, and Participatory Research (PR) as part of ST, provides the theoretical framework used to address these specific objectives. Three principle research methods were utilized in the collection of data for the study. These are: 1) individual interviews including key informants; 2) group interviews; and 3) participant observation. In addition, content analysis and a literature review of existing documentation was done to gain further insights and to give direction to some of the interview questions.

1.6 Assumptions and Limitations of the Thesis

Several assumptions are made in this analysis of the participatory practices of the FSI. The first is that community member participation is essential to sustainable community development. The second assumption is that participation implies enough community member control over the the community development process that they are equal partners in determining the focus, methods and proposed outcomes of that process. The third assumption is that the staff and members of the FSI genuinely attempt to implement community work practices promoting participation and community control over the work they do. Finally there is the assumption that active participation can, in fact, play an integral role in the social change process.

There are also several limitations of this study. One of the important limitations is the relatively short period of time the researcher spent in the field collecting data. While it was possible to collect a significant amount of information, additional time spent in the field would have helped the study.

Except for an historical reference, this study largely ignores government community development initiatives. While this does not affect the study per se, it does reflect that those involved with the FSI have chosen to work independent of government. The assumption made by the FSI and the researcher is that the majority of government programs do not benefit the rural marginalized of Colombia, but in fact serve to maintain economic, social and political control over the population.

Another key limitation stems from the cross-cultural nature of the study. The researcher is neither Colombian nor economically marginalized. As will become evident throughout the study, values and attitudes play a key role in perspectives of participation. The reader should always keep in mind that this study is the assessment of cultural practices as seen through the eyes of someone not of that culture. It is obvious that the results, however scientific, are coloured by this and should be evaluated accordingly. Having said this, it should be noted that at the time of the study I had already spent several years working in Colombia and spoke Spanish fluently.

Finally the study, while sociological in nature, makes reference to other disciplines such as anthropology, political science, education and economics. Those coming from these disciplines who read this study may find their theories do not fully apply or are presented in an overly simplistic fashion. It must be remembered that the purpose of this research is to provide an introductory base for the study of peoples' participation in community development, of which all these disciplines play a role.

1.7 Plan of the Thesis

This research is organized in six chapters. The first chapter contains an introduction to the general concepts associated with the issue of participation in community development. The statement and significance of the problem is then presented, followed by objectives of the research and the assumptions and limitations made in carrying out this study.

Chapter two describes the study setting focusing on the physical characteristics, and the historical and cultural development of the region where the fieldwork took place. Also, a description of a government sponsored rural development program will be included in order to provide an historical example of community member participation in community development work done in the region. Finally a description of the organizational structure of the Fundación San Isidro and a short overview of the communities and projects which served as the bases for the data collected, will be presented.

Chapter three concentrates on a review of the theoretical background of the concepts and paradigms of community development, focusing on the Social Transformational model and on Participatory Research. This provides the theoretical perspective that guided the research as well as provided the framework used to present and analyze the data.

The fourth chapter focuses on the methods of data collection and analysis including strengths and limitations. The data collected, as well as an analysis of this data is presented in chapter five. Finally, chapter six summarizes the study including any learnings, insights, conclusions and recommendations derived from the analysis.

2.0 THE STUDY SETTING

2.1 Introduction

In order to more fully understand this thesis, it is necessary to have an appreciation of the geographical, historical, socio-economic and political context in which the fieldwork took place. It is the purpose of the first section of this chapter to briefly describe: 1) the geography of the region; 2) the cultural and socio-economic evolution of the *altiplano*[2] region of *Boyacá* as a *'minifundista'* society; and 3) *campesino* participation in regional community development projects. These themes are relevant to the nature of the work done by the FSI and the forces which have shaped its community development practices. The second section of the chapter will focus on the history, objectives and organizational structure of the FSI as well as a brief description of the study area and the projects that provided the data for the study. Finally a brief description of some of the guiding principles of the FSI will be presented.

2.2 Characteristics of the Region

The department of *Boyacá* is located in North Central Colombia along the eastern Cordillera of the Andes Mountains (see Figure 1). It has a land mass of 23,189 square kilometers and is bordered on the north by the department[3] of *Santander* and the Republic of *Venezuela*; on the

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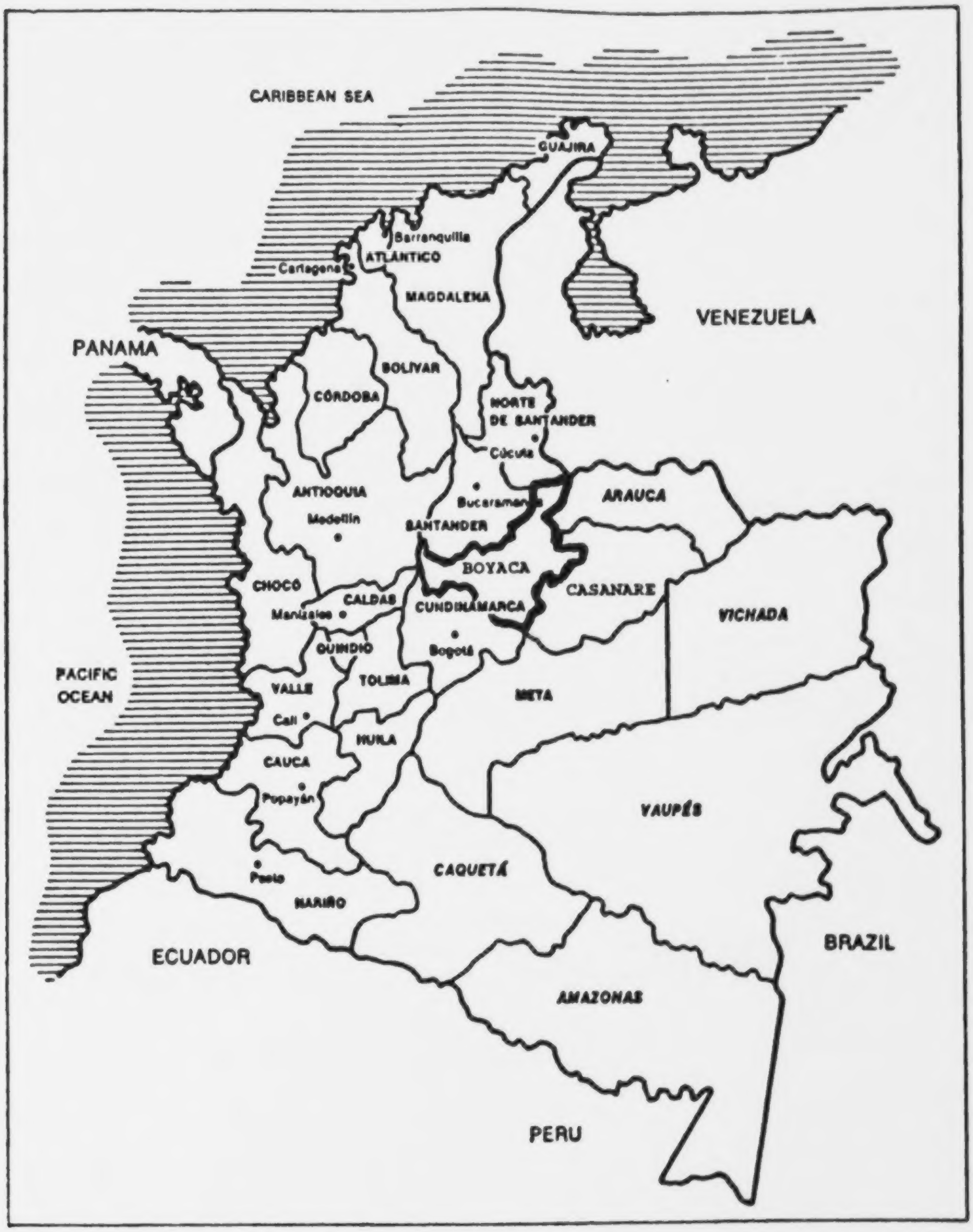
[2] high plateau

[3] Colombia is divided politically into 23 departments (provinces), 4 intendencias (state administrative areas), 5 comisaria (commissions) and 1 distrito federal (federal district).

FIGURE 1

LOCATION OF BOYACA, COLOMBIA
(adapted from Pérez, 1989)


CARIBBEAN SEA
GUAJIRA
Barranquilla
ATLANTICO
Cartagena
MAGDALENA
VENEZUELA
PANAMA
BOLIVAR
CORDOBA
NORTE DE SANTANDER
Cúcuta
ARAUCA
ANTIOQUIA
Medellín
Bucaramanga
SANTANDER
BOYACA
CHOCO
CALDAS
Manizales
CUNDINAMARCA
CASANARE
VICHADA
QUINDIO
Bogotá
PACIFIC OCEAN
VALLE
TOLIMA
META
Cali
HUILA
CAUCA
Popayán
VAUPÉS
CAQUETÁ
Pasto
NARIÑO
ECUADOR
BRAZIL
AMAZONAS
PERU

south by the departments of *Arauca* and *Casanare*, which form part of the area known as the eastern plains; on the south with the department of *Cundinamarca*; and in the west with the department of *Anitoquia* and the *Magdalena* river.

The study took place in the areas refered to as the Eastern Andean region and the Central *Altiplano* which are situated between 5 and 6 degrees north of the equator.

These two areas are characterized as having a broken and undulating topography, and lie within three distinct climatic zones: 1) Sub-Andean temperate lying between 1100 and 2300 meters above sea level (asl) and having average temperatures of 14 to 22 degrees Celsius; 2) the cold Andean zone, occupying areas between 2300 and 3300 meters (asl) with yearly average temperatures of 9 to 14 degrees Celsius; and 3) the high Andean zone which lie between 3300 and 3650 (asl) with average yearly temperatures of 6 and 9 degrees Celsius.

Rainfall, as well as local temperature, fluctuate a great deal between, and within each of these zones (See Figure 2). The region experiences two periods of rain and two dry periods during the year, and has an almost constant amount of daylight hours throughout the year.

The quality of the land for agricultural production varies a great deal within the regions. It ranges from the high northern region with its very steep and rocky terrain, thin layer of soil, limited rain fall and subterranean water sources, to the rich rolling valleys of the south.

The indigenous flora and fauna within the region have been greatly modified by the human population. There are very few areas that retain any of their original integrity and most of the natural animal life is now extinct. Much of this is a result of having converted the existing 'natural' ecosystems into agriculturally productive land. A key component of the sustainable development practices used by the FSI includes training farmers to reintroduce indigenous flora, including food crops, into production practices. It is hoped this will also aid in reducing the considerable erosion that has occurred.

2.3 Historical Development of the Region

2.3.1 Pre-Columbian Culture

The area occupied by present day *Boyacá* was originally inhabited by the *Chibcha*[4] people, who at the time of Spanish contact were a highly evolved agricultural society numbering approximately two million (Hernandez, 1978). They were known as expert weavers, potters and goldsmiths and were considered to be among the most stable and prosperous of all the indigenous peoples encountered by the Spanish *conquistadores*.

As a result of their violent conquest by the Spanish, the Chibcha people were relegated to slavery and eventual extinction. However, their influence is significant when describing the development of the *campesinos*[5] of Boyacá. Many of the cultural and technological aspects of this indigenous culture can still be found, after many centuries, in their *Mestizo*[6] descendants.

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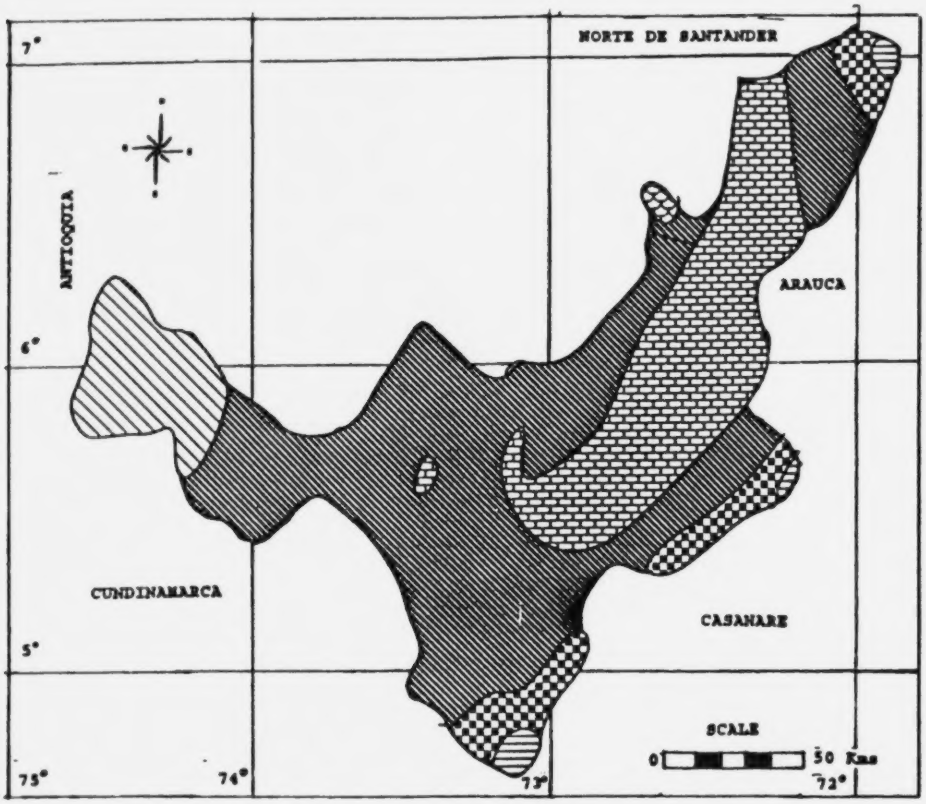
[4] also known as the Muisca

[5] The Spanish word "campesino" refers to any person who works directly with the land who is of low political and economic status.

[6] The word "mestizo" refers to a person of mixed European and Indian ancestry.

FIGURE 2

CLIMATIC ZONES OF BOYACA
(adapted from Pérez, 1989)


7°
NORTE DE SANTANDER
ANTIOQUIA
ARAUCA
6°
CUNDINAMARCA
CASANARE
5°
SCALE
0
50 Kms
75°
74°
73°
72°

LEGEND	Average Annual Temperature (C) and Altitude (meters above sea level)			
Annual Rainfall mm	>21C <1200 m	21-14 C 1200- 2400 m	14-5C 2400-3800 m	<5C >3800 m
>3000	Very Humid Hot	Humid temperate	Humid Cold	
2000-3000	Humid Hot			Paramo
1000-2000				

The region of the *Chibcha* had abundant natural resources and very productive land, often yielding a surplus of food. As a result, they dedicated themselves to a wide range of production and artistic activities. However, their relationship to the land was not only as a means of production, but also a central factor in expressions of social organization and mythology.

The accumulation of a surplus was perceived as undesirable by the *Chibchas* resulting in a complex set of social norms. The idea of land as private property did not exist, although land represented the principle means of production; a notion which has long been lost and does not exist within present day *campesino* society. Land was never perceived as capital, but as an element of nature which was to be used by human beings to meet their subsistence needs. These needs were limited to what was necessary to maintain "a cosmic and ecological equilibrium" (Kalmanovitz, 1978:77). It was the duty of humans to act accordingly and live harmoniously with animals, plants and the stars (Hernandez, 1978).

Chibcha society was delineated along matrilineal clan lines, the family being the basic social unit. Married couples would live in lands occupied by the husband's clan but children would belong to the clan of the wife. While monogamy was the cultural norm, if the economic situation and the individual's importance could sustain more than one spouse, polygamy was tolerated.

Although agriculture formed the basis of their economy, the *Chibchas* also engaged in hunting, fishing, weaving, gold and silver mining and smithing. Corn, cultivated by hand and with only crude implements, was the principle crop providing food as well as construction and clothing material. Salt and emeralds were mined and primarily used in their artisan work and to trade with neighboring groups for cotton.

Today agriculture remains the economic base of *campesinos* in *Boyacá*, although the ancestral knowledge of plants, animals and the environment has almost completely been lost. Any remaining knowledge of *Chibcha* agricultural practices is passed down through a tradition of oral history.

The introduction of the ox driven plough revolutionized agricultural production in *Boyacá* but has not completely replaced the traditional tilling of terraced land with simple hand tools. The use of plants to create traditional medicine has been maintained as has the keeping of sheep and goats.

A strong artisan tradition has also continued. Throughout the country *Boyacenses* are well known for their skill and the beauty of their weaving, pottery, carpentry and gold and silver-smithing. Much of this work is done incorporating the same techniques and designs used by their *Chibcha* ancestors and like them, the *campesina* family makes use of all these activities as the basis of their livelihood.

2.3.2 Conquest and Colonization

The conquest and colonizing of *Boyacá* brought with it new forms of production and land tenure. These new ways resulted from the *conquistadores* transferring and imposing forms of production that existed in Spain. These new forms were in contradiction with those that were in existence at the time in the region, and as such generated a violent process of economic and social change which culminated in the new colonial society. This process is of special interest in that it allows for an understanding of the historical roots which gave rise to the *minifundista* society of present day *Boyacá* (Fals Borda, 1979).

Land tenure in Spain took several forms; from the *latifundio* with its feudal origins, to small private properties. Inherent in all these systems is the idea of private property with land acting as a primary means of production.

The process of colonization of *Boyacá* began with the occupation and domination of *Chibcha* land. Land and resources were expropriated and the Spanish initiated processes of slavery and regimentation which left the indigenous population fitting into the new structure as providers of labour (Fals Borda, 1979). Private property in *Boyacá*, and the rest of Spanish Latin America, was legalized and institutionalized during the Bull Papacy of 1493, in which Pope Alexander the Sixth declared that all land and resources discovered in America, were the legitimate property of the Spanish crown. With this legalization of private property, the lands of America were partitioned and their systematic exploitation began. Not only were the indigenous people not included, but were considered to be the property of those who now owned their ancestral land (Gonzales M., 1977).

Boyacá was then further broken into *Ecomiendas* which were turned over to the Spanish troops. The purpose of the *Ecomienda*, one of the most important Spanish institution in terms of delineating the economic and social relations of Latin America, was to assign a Spanish colonizer, as a result of their loyalty and service to the Spanish crown, a given extension of land and population. In turn it was the colonizer's responsibility to "protect and evangelize the Indians, and to provide them with employment" (Birou, 1971:18). While in Spain, the *Ecomienda* served to protect the Spanish peasant within a feudal system, in Latin America, they were used to exploit the local resources for the personal benefit of the colonizers (Singelmann, 1981). In order to gain prestige, the Spanish were not to engage in any physical work and in order to attain wealth, many used natives to work the land and exploit mines. The *Ecomienda* was perceived as giving the colonizer the right to exploit the labour and resources of the indigenous people.

As estates changed from being based on tribute and labour rights to being based on land ownership, the *encomienda* was replaced by the *hacienda* (Lockhart and Schwartz, 1983). Initially *haciendas* were created to provide subsistence necessities for mining centres (Frank, 1969), but evolved into autonomous production centres surrounded by peripheral communities. Early *haciendas* operated largely outside of the money economy, remunerating labourers in kind or with tokens (Singelmann, 1981) that could be exchanged for food and other products at the *hacienda* store. Some of the most sought after land in Colombia fell within the *Cundi-Boyacense*[7] *altiplano* and especially the *Bogotá* Savannah with its *Duitama, Sogamosa, Santa Rosa, Crinza* and *Belén* valleys (Colmenares, 1972).

The growing demand for certain products by the international market led to the development of large estates known as *latifundios*. The main characteristic of the *latifundio* is the accumulation of large areas of land by one or few owners for the purpose of producing export crops. The *latifundio* system evolved according to the world market for products such as indigo, cotton, bananas and coffee. These products required extensive cultivation in order to be profitable, and eventually the land held by indigenous people in the last remnants of their communitarian system, such as the *ejidos*[8], was taken over. Many of the *latifundios* in *Boyacá* were owned either by members of the same extended family or by the church (Fals Borda, 1979).

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[7] Cundi-boyacense refers to the geographical and cultural region which occupied parts of both the departments of Cundinamarca and Boyacá.

As the *latifundios* grew, the production of the basic grains and food crops for local consumption was relegated to small marginal plots called the *minifundio*, which were cultivated by *campesinos*. The roots of the *minifundio* go back as far back as 1595 when the Spanish crown set aside small plots of lands for indigenous people in order to maintain their willingness, which was obviously reluctant at best, to work the larger land holdings (Fals Borda, 1979). In addition, the Spanish landowners were required to supply 'their Indian population' with the necessary resources. The land, however, was never considered to be the property of the native population nor was the same land available from one year to the next. It was the responsibility of the Catholic church to maintain the land. The trend became one of indigenous people being forced onto more marginalized land while the church's land holdings of much of the most fertile land in the region, grew into some of the largest *haciendas* in the entire country.

The constant need to move, coupled with the *Chibcha* practice of travelling often great distances to trade amongst other groups, have given *campesinos* from *Boyacá* a tradition of migration. This affinity for movement was used by the Spanish *conquistadores* as a means of displacing indigenous groups to areas far from their traditional land. While the indigenous population was working elsewhere, these same *conquistadores* would invade the land they had left. Slowly all the land they had traditionally lived on was expropriated, including the small plots given to them by the crown and church.

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[8] An *Ejido* was common land, granted by the Spanish Crown, where indigenous people would raise livestock and plant crops separated from that of the Spaniards

The evolution of business, the increase in colonization, the disintegration of the indigenous culture and the theft of their land, the inability of the Spanish crown to pay its debts to its European lenders, and the resulting selling off of much of this land to the families of *conquistadores*, all led to much of the land being divided into small private estates. Along with this carving up of the land into private hands, was the dominance of individualistic ideology.

The seizure of indigenous land and its partitioning to small plots initiated the creation of small independently owned farms and left only a few of the communal *ejidos*. However, it is important to distinguish this from the prevalent trait of large colonial *haciendas* that still exist today. These large ranches occupying the best lands, are surrounded by the poor campesino producer, who either renting the land or as a sharecropper, tries to earn a living from the infinitely poorer land of the high *altiplano*.

During the 1950s Colombia, along with most Latin American countries, had equated development with industrialization. This was in response to the dependency on commodities like coffee and sugar which had fostered a boom-to-bust syndrome. During the Great Depression demand for primary products in the industrial world collapsed, as did commodity prices. These conditions provided the rationale for manufacturing. Unable to afford the imports the economy needed, Colombia chose the route of domestic production as a substitute (Berry, 1983).

Although commodities still dominated exports, industry became the most dynamic sector. During the 1950s manufacturing in Colombia expanded by over 8 percent annually (Inter-American Development Bank, 1986). The result was a modernized urban economy and a backward rural one.

The assumption that domestic industries held the key to development depended on a rapidly growing market. In the early years domestic firms were hardly able to meet demand. Eventually, however, the market became saturated and growth rates slowed to replacement levels. The principle cause was the impoverished rural population (Berry, 1983).

The agricultural sector in Colombia was slow to adopt modern farming techniques. The government believed that modernizing agriculture would boost productivity and income, turning the rural population into consumers. This was to be achieved by combining new production methods - from improved seeds to soil additives and tractors - with land reform. However, rural families could not become reliable consumers without a dependable income and therefore it would be necessary to divide unproductive estates. To displace powerful landowners for the benefit of sharecroppers was not the type of policy the country was able to implement. Nevertheless, the government did redistribute 88,000 parcels of land comprising 2.8 million hectares representing about 6 percent of the country's farm families and 10 percent of its agricultural land. Most of this land, however, involved squatters already settled on public land; only 200,000 hectares were actually expropriated (Havens et al, 1980). The result was a technical success and a social failure. By ignoring the social inequities that existed, the state's intervention only reinforced them (Grindle, 1986).

Only the most privileged of the rural population were involved in export agriculture. They had access to financing, to market services and to transportation. To modernize other sectors of agriculture, the state expanded subsidized credit, promoted mechanization and improved storage facilities. Between 1970 and 1980, the area devoted to crops increased by 18 percent and the harvest volume by over 30 percent. The sector's inputs also increased. Tractor use increased by 42 percent, fertilizer consumed rose by 88 percent and the volume of pesticides went up by 75 percent (López, 1982). The question of who benefitted from this progress, however, requires further comment.

Credit went primarily to those who had the collateral. The *hacienda* of the past became the successful agribusiness of the present. Given their education, wealth and connections, the old landlords were in the best position to understand what market access, cheap credit and mechanization meant. As they adopted new technology, they undercut one rationale for land reform - mechanization reduced reliance of sharecroppers and tenants, the very clientele land distribution was supposed to assist (Miró, 1982)

Small farmers rarely benefitted from the state's incentive program. Lacking sufficient assets, unable to fill out forms and caught in the ever present control by middlemen, they were considered high-risk clients the banks avoided.

Large producers gained the most, small holders profited little and sharecroppers lost out. Despite modernization, most rural families remained poor. In 1981, 60 percent lived in conditions of poverty, over half in absolute poverty (López, 1986). Development under the auspices of state-supported agribusiness simply generated a different version of the old social structure.

Today the situation remains similar. Within *Boyacá* exist all forms of land tenure: ownership, renting, sharecropping, land which has been pawned, squatting, and in a few cases cooperatively owned land. Based on population, the predominant form of land tenure is the small one to three hectare plot (Perez et al, 1985).

Boyacá has an estimated population of 1.5 million people, the majority being *Mestizo*. Most people are poor, have little, if any education and are deeply religious. The majority of the population is rural and as in the past, face a myriad of political and economic hardships.

Small land owners can only obtain credit at usurious rates, placing them at disadvantage with respect to agricultural entrepreneurs. As a result of often inefficient production methods, the small scale farmer obtains relatively low crop yields that are of poor quality. Products then are sold at poor prices at local markets.

In an attempt to ensure higher yields, farmers often purchase inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at very high prices. Due to factors such as the commercial structure and the proliferation of intermediaries in the rural market, input prices are higher for the small-scale farmer than for the larger landowner. In addition, most have limited access to transportation for their goods and are forced to sell their products at very low prices to transportation intermediaries.

A recent initiative will further jeopardize the small landowner in many parts of *Boyacá*. As a result of intense lobbying from the region's industrial sector, the government has began developing a plan of converting land along, and in the vicinity of, the *Tunja-Sogamosa* highway from agricultural production into a linear industrial park. The area has good highways, is close to the capital and rich in natural resources. This is part of an overall trend to industrialize *Boyacá*. During the period this research took place, taxes in some areas rose by over 400 percent forcing small land owners to sell their land. Decisions continued to be made on behalf of the people without any of their input.

2.4 Participation in The Government Integrated Rural Development Program (DRI)

By the 1970s Colombia had extension programs, agrarian banks and marketing organizations. However, they were designed with commercial agriculture in mind and tended to benefit large producers rather than the small farmer.

Colombia's integrated approach to rural development began in the late 1970s. As an overall Latin American strategy, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, an affiliate of the Organization of American States initiated projects designed to emphasize practical research and rural development geared to small farmers.

In 1976, Colombia initiated the rural development program called DRI (Desarollo Rural Integrado[9]) with the aim of increasing food production, raise farm incomes and reduce rural to urban migration. The new program was aimed at reorganizing existing agencies into one integrated organization.

The program took place in seventeen rural districts in eight departments including *Boyacá*. The program increased the budgets for rural agencies active in DRI districts such as the Extension Services and the Agrarian Bank. Similarly, additional funds went to the national training institute called the *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (SENA), the cooperative marketing agency *Centro de Cooperativas Regionales* (CECORA), and the government natural resource department called *Instituto Nacional para el Desarrollo de Recursos Naturales* (INDERENA) (DRI, 1983). The problem was that each agency had its own program and a separate budget. As a result the strategy's weak point was coordination. There was some cooperation, but not a combined strategy for each district (Grindle, 1981).

Early evaluations cited poorly defined interagency objectives, unsatisfactory coordination and overcentralized decision making (*Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura*, 1981). As a result, a lateral planning strategy called PROPLAN was proposed, which called for keeping planning and coordination as close to the farmer as possible as well as decentralizing administration.

The project's approach to rural development was to be community-oriented. SENA, the training agency, provided a range of courses to local groups and agricultural cooperatives. In *Boyacá*, where seed potatoes were so critical, SENA offered courses in areas such as production methods, selection and storage. To strengthen the small farmers' bargaining power, the program sponsored cooperatives. In *Boyacá*, the potato cooperative *Agropapa*, began storage and marketing operations in 1982.

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[9] Integrated Rural Development

Providing credit also constituted a large component of the program. In addition, the program addressed issues of health, education, water purification, road construction and reforestation. However, because these areas were controlled by departments not directly involved in DRI and often under the guidance of departmental governments, the program met with limited success.

The DRI program continued until the late eighties. A combination of a lack of resources and corruption, along with a deteriorating political situation slowed the program almost to a halt. In the end the DRI program affected approximately 20 percent of farmers in Colombia but less than 5 percent of farmers in *Boyacá* (Lang, 1988).

While involving small farmers in specific components of the program, the nature of the participation was that of identifying production issues, organizing relevant extension education courses and some implementation strategies. The program combined elements of the Technical Assistance and Self-Help approaches to community development, (to be explained in detail in chapter three). Community members participated in the pre-determined DRI agenda, which viewed training and improved production methods as the means for improving the quality of life for small farmers. While in some cases the program was successful in this regard, there was no analysis done with community members as to the structural causes of their economic situation. No training was given on carrying out research, social analysis or political organization. Development was seen as ocurring within established political and economic structures and parameters.

The lack of such training became evident once the DRI program slowed down. The small farmer had become dependant on DRI supervision, guidance and technology. They were no more organized or prepared to deal with their poverty after the completion of the program, than before it was initiated. In fact in one case, the *Caja Agraria*[10] became more powerful as a result of the program, and the securing of loans for small farmers became more difficult.

2.5 The Fundación San Isidro (FSI)

2.5.1 History and Mandate

The Fundación San Isidro[11] (FSI) is a non profit community development organization that works with communities in 21 municipal districts within *Boyacá*. The founders of the FSI originally worked with *El Secretariado de Pastoral Social (SEPAS)*[12] of the Dioces of *Duitama* and *Sogamosa*. In 1979, however, the idea surfaced of creating an organization independent of the formal church structure that would ensure the integrity of the original community development objectives, as well as promote programs designed to train and organize the *campesinos* communities with which they were working. This resulted from the church's increasingly conservative community work orientation that removed community members from being involved in the decisions guiding the work.

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[10] the government farm credit bank

[11] San Isidro is the patron saint of agriculture

[12] The Social Pastoral Secretariat

The *promotores sociales* (refered to as *promotores* for the remainder of this report) who were working with the Church had by this point, been receiving training for over ten years in organizing *campesinos* both in their own rural communities and within the areas administered by the Dioces. However, the work they were doing was increasingly being restricted by the new more conservative orientation of SEPAS. Clear and increasingly divisive contradictions began to arise between the *promotores* and Church authorities until in 1982, the FSI was born. Formal institutional relations with the church were broken although the two continued to collaborate in much of their work.

With this separation the FSI consolidated its autonomy, and reaffirmed its basic guiding convictions that the promotion and organization of the rural *campesino* base was the foundation of all work they would do. The fundamental objective was to contribute to the social and economic transformation of Colombia. The specific objectives of the FSI are:

1. to contribute to the promotion and betterment of the quality of life of the campesinos of *Boyacá*
2. to implement education programs for leaders of both sexes that are involved in the organization and promotion of their communities
3. to promote the training of agriculture technologists that will act as consultants to those communities where the FSI is working
4. to promote the formation of cooperatives and community businesses that aid in improving the socio-economic level of campesinos

5. to promote the training of community health workers and home economists in all communities, as well as providing first aid materials and organizing campaigns around preventative health
6. to create a rotating fund in order to provide loans to small community businesses at interest rates that cover only monetary devaluation and administrative costs (Perez, et al, 1985:6-7)

The FSI is based in the municipality of *Duitama* with three additional training and agricultural centres located throughout *Boyacá* (see Figure 3). The administrative centre, called *El Rincon,*[13] sits on 40 hectares of land. Potatoes, corn and wheat are cultivated which, in conjunction with crops grown at the other centres, are used for self-consumption, to help feed people attending training programs, and to sell at local markets. There is a large area set aside for growing experimental crops which are used for the extensive agricultural training programs the FSI offers. Also located at the centre are a number of prefabricated buildings used to house those who live and work at the centre as well as *promotores* attending workshops, meetings and training courses. There is also a day-care, a large meeting room, a kitchen and common eating area, garage, pottery workshop and an audio visual centre. Many other community organizations also use the facilities for meetings and training.

The remaining three satellite farms are located in different climatic zones throughout *Boyacá*. Aside from their role in agricultural production, staff and volunteers facilitate community work in their region. These farms are called: 1) *La Esperanza*[14], located in the municipality of *Jenesano* and falling within the temperate climatic zone; 2) *Puebla,*[15] which lies in the municipality of *Tibasosa* and is

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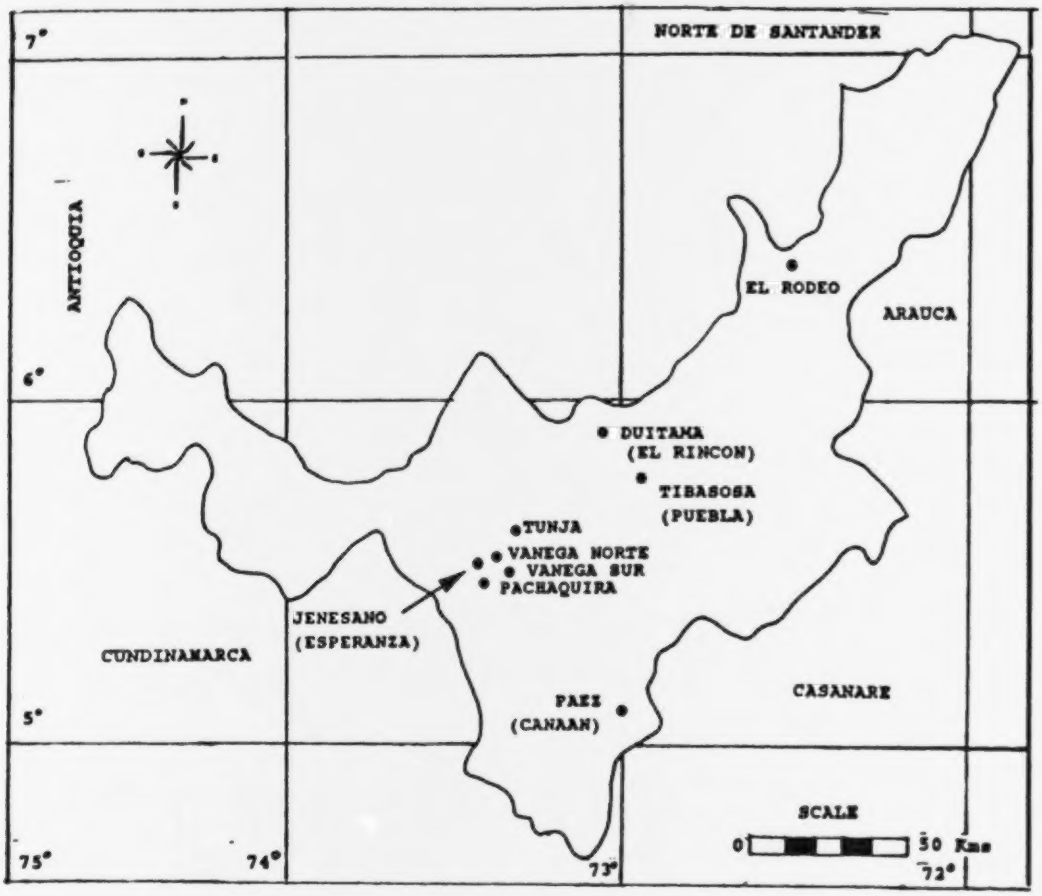
[13] the "corner"
[14] the word for hope
[15] a biblical meeting place

FIGURE 3

THE STUDY AREA


7°
6°
5°
75°
74°
73°
72°
NORTE DE SANTANDER
ANTIOQUIA
ARAUCA
CUNDINAMARCA
CASANARE
EL RODEO
DUITAMA
(EL RINCON)
TIBASOSA
(PUEBLA)
TUNJA
VANEGA NORTE
VANEGA SUR
PACHAQUIRA
JENESANO
(ESPERANZA)
PAEZ
(CANAAN)
SCALE
0
50 Kms

characterized by a high cool climate; and 3) *Canaán*[16], situated in the municipality of *Paez* and falls within the hot region bordering the Eastern Plains.

The farms play a central role in the work done by the FSI. Each is located in areas with distinct climatic and socio-economic characteristics. They serve as experimental farms which make use of local knowledge and technology emphasizing sustainable agricultural practices. Each farm serves as a training centre focusing on technical areas such as agriculture and forestry, as well as community development practices. Their proximity to the various communities they work with facilitates better communication and participation with community members as well as better access for people to the various training programs they offer.

The farms are also key producers of food which is exchanged and distributed between the various farms, providing members with a better and more healthy product and permitting the FSI to partially work independently of local markets. It is hoped that the farms will eventually produce enough to act as major revenue generators which can then be used to finance most of the programs offered and reduce the dependency on external funding sources.

2.5.2 Constituent Groups Within the FSI

2.5.2.1 Members

The FSI's statutes dictate that members are *campesinos* from *Boyacá* that own between 1 and 3 hectares of land. Youth members are not required to be landowners but must work on their family plot and may also work as farm labourers. To be eligible for membership, an individual must be involved in FSI training courses and community work for a minimum of three years and be involved and dedicated to the work done by the FSI.[17]

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[16] Canan, name for ancient Israel

The over 300 active members of both sexes are between 18 and 65 years old. Education levels range from illiteracy to completing elementary school with a small percentage having continued on to secondary and high school. At the time of the research the first member to have gone on to a post-secondary institution was in her final year of study.

The range of involvement of members in the FSI community development work differs significantly. Some have worked for over fifteen years while others only have worked the minimum three years required to become a member. All members have received training in a variety of technical areas and in community and personal development.

Daily activities for members alternate between the work they do as small producers, to the training and educational work done with other *campesinos*. In addition, members participate in the necessary communal work needed to maintain the FSI and are involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the various programs run by the FSI.

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[17] Initially, anyone could become a member after having gone through any FSI sponsored course. The 3 year stipulation was adopted after a number of new members joined in an attempt to align the FSI with a militant opposition organization. It was felt that 3 years would help to determine the commitment of a member to the values of the FSI. Given this, if enough members wished to change the focus of the organization then it would be acceptable.

2.5.2.2 Management

Management of the FSI is comprised of paid administrators and the elected Executive Council. The hired administrators are the Executive Director, the 4 farm managers and the coordinators of the various committees. It is a requirement that all management staff also be members of the FSI.

2.5.2.3 Paid Staff

In addition to the paid administrators, there are a range of paid staff employed by the FSI. These positions include secretarial and bookkeeping staff, a child care worker, farm workers who live either near *El Rincon* or in proximity of the other farms, and several technical staff.

In addition to the above positions, there are a number of technical and professional staff, the majority of whom are from other regions of the country. They work for the FSI and are responsible for technical training as well as doing direct community and committee work. This includes an agronomist, a forestry specialist, an anthropologist, a doctor, a dentist and a childcare worker. Those from outside the region are paid the same as all staff but cannot become members as they do not meet membership requirements. While these staff cannot vote, they sit on most committees acting as policy advisors and carrying considerable influence. As the membership becomes more educated, these positions are being filled by FSI members. At the time of this fieldwork the audio-visual technician and a pottery instructor were both members.

All paid staff, regardless if they are members or not, are paid the same wage. In some cases salaries may be augmented depending on the number of dependant family members or in the event of increased economic hardship. This is consistent with the FSI belief that the different positions refer to different tasks and responsibilities rather than varying degrees of value to the organization.

2.5.2.4 *Promotores Sociales*

Promotores play a key role in the operations of the FSI. They are members that, in conjunction with staff, carry out the majority of the *formación*[18] component of the community development work done by the FSI. In this capacity they also act as a liaison between the FSI and communities in the region in which they reside. *Promotores* are volunteer staff, receiving only expense money for the work they do.

2.5.2.5 Community Members

Not everyone from the various communities that are involved in programs are FSI members as per the criteria described above. These people include those who come to one of the FSI farms for courses, or who are involved in training programs offered in their communities. They cannot vote or sit on FSI committees. They are, however, active decision making participants within their own community groups and therefore have influence over what programs and community work take place in their communities. Their participation often occurs through the individual community groups. At the time of the research there were over 600 families involved in FSI programs. It is estimated that over

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[18] formación refers to the process of consciousness raising. This will be discussed at length further on in the thesis.

25,000 have taken training courses or been active in FSI programs since its inception.

2.5.2.6 External Organizations

While not falling within the formal decision making structure of of the FSI, external organizations influence the work done at the FSI. These organizations include various international funding bodies as well as the *Pontificía Universidad Javeriana*[19] (UJ). None of these organizations have any formal decision making power. In fact, the FSI has lost significant amounts of funding in order not to compromise the organization's objectives and ideals, and the control members have over the programs and work done.

2.5.3 Administrative and Organizational Structure

The decision making structure of the FSI is horizontal, meaning it is based on a consensus model rather than a vertical and hierarchical model. The structure of the organization (see Figure 4) reflects this principle. The FSI is structured so that information, concerns and suggestions can freely flow between the various constituents allowing for as many people as possible to be involved in decision making.

While certain bodies and individuals are responsible for making certain decisions and carrying out specific tasks, this is not done in isolation of the members of the various constituent groups. The differences refer to responsibilities rather than degree of power.

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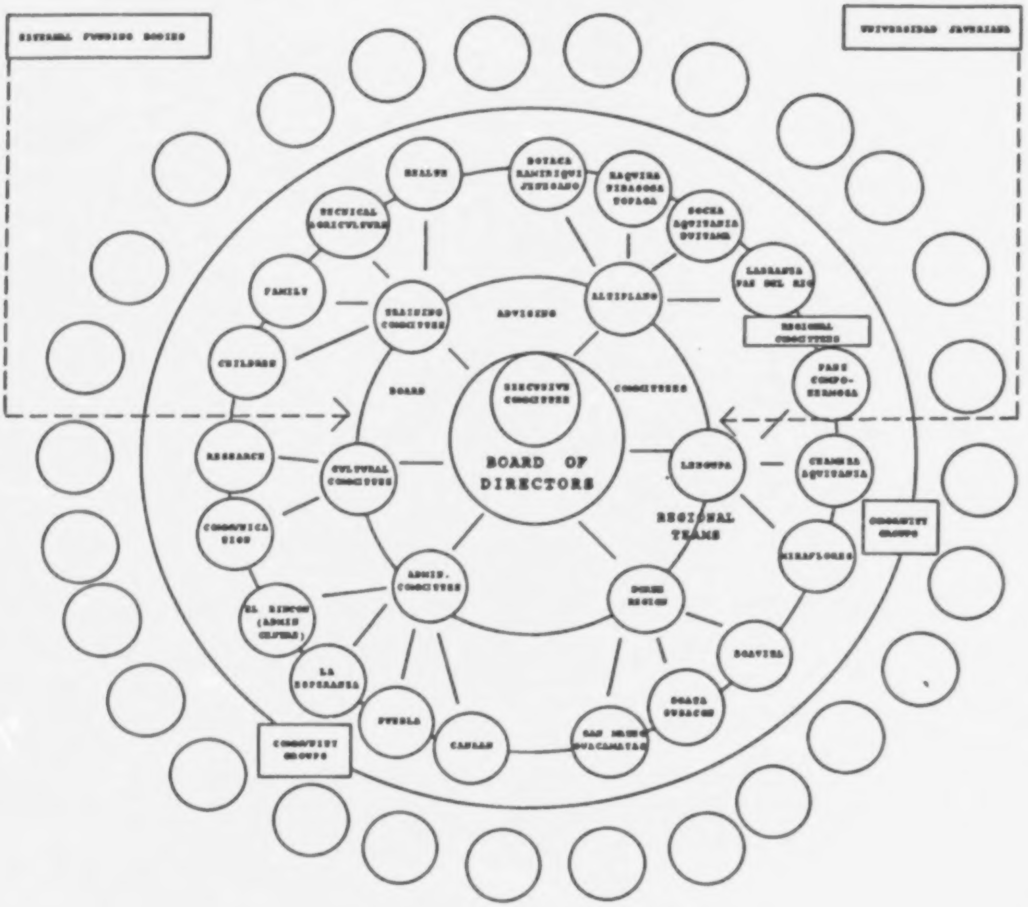
[19] the Pontificía Universidad Javeriana, was instrumental is setting up this research by making the necessary contact with the FSI

FIGURE 4

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE FUNDACION SAN ISIDRO


EXTERNAL FUNDING BODIES
UNIVERSIDAD JAVERIANA
HEALTH
BOYACA RAMIRIQUI JENESANO
RAQUIRA TIBASOSA TOPAGA
SOCHA AQUITANIA DUITAMA
LABRANZA PAZ DEL RIO
TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE
FAMILY
TRAINING COMMITTEE
ADVISING
ALTIPLANO
REGIONAL COMMITTEES
CHILDREN
BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
COMMITTEES
PAEZ CAMPO-HERMOSA
RESEARCH
CULTURAL COMMITTEE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LENGUPA
CHAMEZA AQUITANIA
COMMUNICATION
REGIONAL TEAMS
COMMUNITY GROUPS
MIRAFLORES
ADMIN. COMMITTEE
NORTE REGION
EL RINCON (ADMIN CENTER)
BOAVITA
LA ESPERANZA
SOATA SUSACON
PUEBLA
CANAAN
SAN MATEO GUACAMAYAS
COMMUNITY GROUPS

Having said this, there are people who, by virtue of their position in the organization or knowledge they possess, carry more decision making authority than do others. This is an issue that affects decisions and one the FSI is aware of and is attempting to address. The implications of this will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

2.5.3.1 The *Asemblea*[20]

Decisions regarding work, action plans, investments, etc. are discussed and analyzed in the *Asemblea*, which represents the highest decision making authority[21] within the organization. Members are elected to the *Asemblea* at the annual general meeting and sit for a two year term although there is no limit as to the number of terms they many remain. The *Asemblea* meets at least once every three months or as needed. It is comprised of FSI members including staff, *promotores*, FSI founders and people from the communities. In the *Asemblea* there must be representation from all regions and all committees. At the time of this research there were thirty six members although there is no fixed limit. Of this thirty six, fourteen were men and the remainder women. Seven members were under the age of twenty.

2.5.3.2 The Executive Council

The Executive Council is made up of members of the *Asemblea*. At the time there were eleven members representing all committees as well as the Executive Director and the Administrators from each of the farms.

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[20] The General Assembly

[21] authority does not in this case mean absolute decision making power. It is here where recommendations for action are identified and final decisions are made.

It is this body that is responsible for the day to day running of the FSI and for implementing policy that has been ratified by the *Asemblea*. They have the "freedom and responsibility to develop operational mechanisms, and programs consistent with FSI policy" (article 36 of the FSI constitution). The Executive Council is also responsible for the fiscal control and auditing of all FSI activities.

2.5.3.3 The Executive Director

The Executive Director is a paid position appointed by the *Asemblea*. S/he reports to the Executive Council, and through it, to the *Asemblea*. It is their responsibility to coordinate and monitor policy implementation and the operations of the FSI. It is important to note that they have no additional decision making power and cannot dictate the work done. Their purpose is one of coordinating and keeping the various constituents and decision making bodies informed. In addition, they prepare reports and coordinate the various *Asemblea* and Executive Council meetings, as well as those meetings attended by the membership at large.

2.5.3.4 Committees

The FSI has a complex committee structure as highlighted in Figure 4. There are six principal committees that report directly to the *Asemblea,* although day to day operations are monitored by the Executive Council and the Executive Director. Each of these committees in turn has subcommittees and has representation on it from other committees. The six key committees are: 1) the cultural committee, which in turn overseas the research and communication committees; 2) the *formación*/training committee, to which the children, family, agricultural training and health committees report; 3) the administration committee, which coordinates the committees that oversee the running of the four farms; and 4) three committees which coordinate the work done in each of the regions where direct community work is done - the North, the High Plateau and the Lowlands. All committees act as advisory bodies to the *Asemblea*.

Each of the committees is responsible for developing specific work plans as they relate to their area of responsibility and to act as advisory bodies to the *Asemblea* They cannot dictate the work done in the other committees or in the various communities. Committees are made up of technical staff, paid FSI member staff and community representatives, who often are *promotores*.

2.5.3.5 Community Groups

Community members control the local programatic direction of the FSI through their individual community group. They have further influence through representation on the various FSI committees, or as members of the *Asemblea*. It is here where ideas and programs often originate and where those developed by the FSI decision making structure are either ratified or rejected before being implemented in the communities. These groups, in conjunction with FSI staff and the *promotores*, determine what programs will be implemented in their own communities. They help to give direction to the various committees primarily by sending representatives, through information sharing, and via staff and *promotores*. This communication process, to be discussed in chapter five, is key to maintaining community control over the community development work done.

As mentioned, not all the people from community groups are FSI members. They cannot vote or sit on FSI committees. They are, however, active decision making participants within their own community groups. There are over 50 community groups representing 21 municipalities. This number is down from a high of 37 municipalities during the early to mid 1980s. The organization decided to reduce the number of communities they worked with because resources, both financial and human, did not allow them adequately meet the needs of such a high number.

2.6 The Study Area

The majority of the research, as shown in Figure 3, was carried out in: 1) the communities of *Vanega Norte, Vanega Sur* and *Pachaquirá* in the municipalities of *Boyacá* and *Jenesano* including the farm *Esperanza*; and 2) the area surrounding the farm *Puebla* which lies in the community of *El Hato* in the municipality of *Tibasosa*. The work done at *Puebla* centred around people who had relocated from the community of *El Rodeo* located in the northern municipality of *Boavita*.

2.6.1 The Communities and the Projects

It is useful, at this point, to give the reader a better understanding of the type of projects the FSI is involved with. The following descriptions are designed to do this as well as introduce the projects and communities from which the data were collected. These projects and communities will be refered to extensively in the data chapter.

2.6.1.1 *Vanega Norte, Vanega Sur* and *Pachaquira*

Several women from the communities of *Vanega Norte, Vanega Sur* and *Pachaquira*, each located a few hours walking distance from the farm *Esperanza*, approached the FSI for training in sewing and knitting for the purpose of income generation.

In the cases of all three communities there was no initial interest in doing *formación* but because it was a FSI requirements, they agreed. At the time of the research, the FSI had been working in these communities for about thirteen months.

2.6.1.2 Puebla

The research done at *Puebla* centred around a group of six families who had been living at the farm for approximately one year. These families came from the community of *El Rodeo* in the municipality of *Boavita* (see Figure 3) located in the mountainous region of Northern *Boyacá*. They were primarily tobacco farmers who had been barely surviving on the small parcels of land they owned. The land served to produce not only this cash crop, but subsistence food crops as well.

The land was not productive and water availability was scarce due to poor supply and large land owners controlling the water source. Each family in *El Rodeo* had the equivalent of as much water as could run out of a one inch tube for one hour per week. This served for personal use as well as for irrigating crops.

The FSI had been involved in community work with the people of *El Rodeo* since the formation of the organization. The community had been organizing and doing tobacco industry research as well as investigating land ownership and water rights. The idea had also been suggested by several families that there was need to leave the area because no matter how much analysis and work they did, the land was not of sufficient quality to produce enough to meet the needs of the families living there. Several meetings were set up with the FSI to analyze the implications of such a move and to gather information so that appropriate strategies could be developed.

After an exhausting process of research and discussion among community members and the FSI it was decided that certain families, to be chosen by the community involved, would move to the farm *Puebla* where land would be set aside for them to cultivate. In addition to the land, the FSI would provide seed, fertilizers and food until such time the group had produced enough to become self-sufficient. The long-term goal was to find land that the group could buy, through a non-interest loan from the FSI.

2.6.1.3 Duitama

A wide range of activities occured at *El Rincon* during my stay that gave opportunity to observe and assess participation. I attended a number of meetings and workshops including a three day meeting of the *Asemblea*. In addition, I had access to the constant movement of people who were coming and going from the farm.

2.6.1.4 Policy Workshop on the New Constitution

During the time of this research, Colombia was involved in a major constitutional reform process. Elections had been held to form the body that was responsible for drafting the new constitution. Popular organizations[22] throughout the country felt that while they had been involved in the voting, there was little chance that the views and aspirations of the marginalized sectors of society would ultimately be reflected in the new constitution. At the request of members, the FSI organized a three day workshop on the proposed changes with the objective of drafting suggestions to be forwarded to the President of the Constitutional Assembly. Approximately eighty people attended including members of the board, promotores, staff and community members.

2.6.1.5 The Research and Training in Duitama Project[23] (RTD)

At the end of 1981 the Department of Economic Science and Administration at the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana* and the FSI became involved in a joint participatory research project that addressed problems faced by farmers in *Boyacá*. The short term objectives of the program centred on training *promotores* in PR methods in order to collect and analyze data concerning agricultural production. Through this process it was hoped the *promotores* and community members would better understand their living conditions which eventually would lead to strategies aimed at improving these conditions.

The medium term objectives included training *promotores* in the use of audio/visual production in order to disseminate the results of the research. This, in turn, might lead to a greater awareness amongst *campesinos* of their living conditions. The long term goals were for community members to design, implement to evaluate community development programs and activities which would improve the quality of life of *campesinos*.

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[22] popular organizations refer to grassroot or populace based groups
[23] The Spanish title is Investigación - Capacitación en Duitama

The project carried on for 6 years involving 150 communities in 37 municipalities. It consisted of training community representatives in PR practices, carrying out of the research and disseminating the results back to the communities.

2.6.1.6 The Integrated Agricultural Marketing Development Project[24] (IAMDP)

When I first arrived at the farm at Duitama I participated in three days of meetings designed to clarify the logistics and finer details of a new development project which had begun in the last six months. This was the first of several workshops around this project which I attended over the course of the fieldwork.

The FSI had recently initiated the Integrated Agricultural Marketing Development Project (IAMDP). The project included many components highlighted in the analytical framework guiding this research and allowed for a detailed examination of the participation. It also provided an opportunity to observe the relationship between the FSI, the UJ and an external funding body.

The IAMDP has the overall objective of improving the quality of life of *campesinos* by helping them develop production and marketing systems in which they are controlling decision making and that are based on local and regional development priorities. This is to be accomplished through training *promotores* in PR methods allowing for community members to do a *diagnóstico*[25] of the root causes of the problems they face. The research focuses on the conditions and characteristics of current production and marketing practices to establish strategies and mechanisms which will strengthen local initiatives. These initiatives will, in turn, improve production efficiency and increase revenues. *Campesinos* can then develop marketing systems which are more reflective of their real needs.

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[24] The Spanish title for this project is *Proyecto Integral de Desarrollo de Mercadeo Agropecuaria en Boyacá*

The project also hopes to help *campesinos* to improve methods of conserving and storing agricultural products and to train them in basic secondary food techniques such as producing starches and jams. This may lead to improved nutrition, health and community organization.

The key objectives are to improve the quality of life of those involved while diminishing their dependence of outside food and technology. Self-sufficient food production and inter-community distribution are cornerstone goals of the project with the hope that the applicable traditional skills that will be learned and the resources developed will then be passed on to other communities.

The project is to be implemented at the four farms of the FSI, and in the municipalities of *Boavita* and *Paez*. These areas are considered the pilot regions with the intention of expanding to other areas. They were chosen because of the diversity they represent. Some are situated on poor land with little water while others on land that is fertile.

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[25] the term *diagnóstico* refers to process of understanding the forces that act upon the lives of communities and their members. It is an amplification of social analysis in that not only does it look at the social influences but also focuses on historical, cultural, environmental and individual elements

Certain areas have access to transportation while little transportation infrastructure exists in others.

2.7 Guiding Principles of the Fundación San Isidro

The Fundación San Isidro has an unfaltering and passionate commitment for working toward the necessary social changes to bring about a more equitable and just world for the marginalized in Colombia and more specifically the *campesinos* of *Boyacá*. There also exists a fundamental belief in the capacity of these same people to bring about change through their own analysis, planning and work. They firmly believe that without participation the structures needed to bring about change will never come. The response to these principles has been the placing of marginalized members of communities at the centre of the evolution of the community work principles and practices that guide their work.

The nature of the work done by the FSI is twofold; training and *formación,* or consciousness raising. The FSI provides training in the areas of agriculture, community development, the production and use of audiovisual resources, music, community health, and a variety of skills designed for income generation such as sewing and knitting. Both integrating and paralleling this is a process of collectively analyzing and understanding the forces that shape their reality and the generating of conscious and analytical participation in processes of community work and social change. *Formación* is a critical part of their community development work. It is a component of all the training programs they provide.

All FSI training and community work emphasizes communication among all those involved as well as the sharing of knowledge produced by the population based on its own experience. This allows each community, which is often isolated from others, to acquire information and experience from other communities. People come to understand the role between their lives and the life of their community, and how this relates on a larger regional and national level.

The organizational structure developed by the FSI is reflective of these principles. It attempts to provide the opportunity for maximum input by all constituents of the organization at each step and level of the decision making process. It does not, however, rely on community member involvement in every detail necessary for the organization to function. As will be shown in the data chapter, community members have input into all key decisions affecting their communities and the organization.

It would be wrong to leave the reader thinking that the FSI is merely a non-governmental organization (NGO) involved in training and community development. The FSI perceives itself as much a movement as an organization or agency. It does not exist independently of the communities and people it works with. Those involved become the organization. This distinction is paramount as this study examines the participation practices of the FSI.

3.0 PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on the role of community participation in community development in order to create a framework for assessing the participation practices of the FSI.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of community development models and the key variables used in the study of these models. These variables are then adapted and used as the framework for assessing the role of participation in three predominant community development models. Contrasting and comparing these models serves to highlight key differences in the assumptions that guide community work and by extension, participatory practices. Finally, based on this analysis, the specific framework to be used in describing and assessing the participatory practices of the FSI will be presented.

3.2 Theoretical Models of Community Development

The expansion of theoretical literature on community development has been accompanied by an increasing complexity in its analysis and classification (Roberts, 1979). In what is one of the classic discussions of community development models, Rothman (1974) outlines three basic orientations to community development work: locality development, social planning and social action. These he discusses in relation to twelve practice variables: 1) goal categories of community action; 2) assumptions concerning community structure and problem conditions; 3) basic change strategy; 4) characteristic change tactics and techniques; 5) salient practitioner roles; 6) medium of change; 7) orientation toward power structure(s); 8) boundary definition of the community client system or constituency; 9) assumption regarding interests of community subparts; 10) conception of the public interest; 11) conception of the client population or constituency; and 12) conception of client role.

Other theorists, while using similar criteria, have adopted chronologically based forms of description and analysis (Gianotten and de Wit, 1987[26] and Hayden, 1986[27]) or those based on differences in training or change strategies (Ahmed and Coombs, 1974[28]). Christenson and Robinson (1989) use a similar system to Rothman, classifying them as the self-help approach, the technical assistance approach and the conflict approach.

While drawing on the work of the other theorists and roughly paralleling the models identified by Rothman, three community development models will be presented and analyzed in this chapter. These are: 1) the self-help model; 2) the technical assistance model; and 3) the social transformation model. As part of the discussion of the social transformation model, a description of participatory research (PR) will be included as it is a key methodology utilized by the FSI in their community development work.

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[26] De Wit identifies six development models (community development, modernization and technological diffusion, agrarian reform, green revolution, and appropriate technology) and traces them through a chronological development, claiming that each one flows from the inadequacies of its predecessor.

[27] Similar to de Wit, Hayden identifies a chronological progression of community work. he identifies four which he calls "trickle down", "integrated development", "small is beautiful "and "the enabling environment".

[28] Ahmed and Coombs identify four rural development orientations based on their orientation to training and change strategies. They are: extension, training, cooperative self-help, and integrated development

Each community development model will be considered in relation to the following variables: 1) community needs and the objectives of the community work; 2) basic change strategies; and 3) the community worker's role and his or her relationship to the community. While all the variables described by Rothman above are important, many tend to overlap. In considering only these three it is possible to examine the role participation plays in each model according to those variable most relevant to the stated objectives of this study. This, in turn, provides the theoretical foundations for the development of a framework which will guide the assessment of participation at the FSI in the data and discussion chapters of the thesis.

3.2.1 Community Needs and Community Development Objectives

3.2.1.1 The Self-help Model

In his discussion of community organizations, Rothman refers to two contrasting types of goals, "task" and "process" goals. "Task goals" are aimed at the completion of a concrete task such as a service delivery, or the construction of a specific element of an organization's physical infrastructure. The aims of "process goals" include such things as system maintenance, forming cooperative working relationships, creating community problem solving structures, improving the power base of the community, stimulating interest and participation in community affairs, fostering collaborative attitudes and practices, and increasing indigenous leadership (Rothman, 1968) He emphasized that the goals of the self-help approach (SH), or in his words "locality development, are process goals.

Hakim (1982), based on his experience with development projects in the Caribbean says that the

> most productive projects are not necessarily goals; rather they tend to be projects in which (1) the local organizational and its members have acquired skill, knowledge and the capacity to solve problems and manage problems; and (2) local resources and initiatives have been mobilized for sustained efforts over time (p. 140)

According to Cary (1970), the primary objective of the self-help model is to assist communities in learning attitudes and competencies to bring about their own development. Roberts (1979), emphasizing the process goals of community development, states that learning about one's own environment and oneself is the first stage of development. He says that while development is, in a narrow sense, about achieving the substantive objectives set by a community, it is, more broadly, about a view of nature and a sense of order. The central objective of community development is to promote the learning of the community and of individuals in it, or as he says to improve " the ability of groups of people to make choices, implement them, to judge them, and to revise them so that the condition of life improves." (p. 41).

This focus on changes in attitudes and skills makes development a psycho-social problem (Ander Egg, 1976). Within this school of thought, *campesino* resistance to change is often seen as the result of fatalistic, individualistic and conservative attitudes. Erasmus' (1968) theory of "*encogido* syndrome", in which the *campesino* is seen as timid, suspicious, apathetic and not wanting to relate to people of superior social status, is one example.

This psycho-social orientation is still prevalent despite being widely criticized. In his critique Worsley (1984) emphasizes this is the absence of a political-economic analysis, claiming that the self-help model

> drew upon a de-politicized version of Mid-West populism ... from which any vestige of conflict theory had been removed. the central theoretical notion was that the farmers' problems were basically problems of knowledge (i.e. ignorance) and of communication...(p. 145)

3.2.1.2 The Technical Assistance Model

In the technical assistance model (TA) of community work, the emphasis is on concrete tasks and technical change. This orientation corresponds generally to what Rothman calls social planning, and to the modernization and diffusionist theories outlined by Gianotton and de Wit (1987). In this model, development strategies are based on the acquisition of technical skills and on those who are oriented to solving the substantive and infrastructural problems themselves.

Substantive or task goals, rather than process goals, become the focus in this model. The objectives of community work and development are phrased in terms of alleviating concrete problems rather than in the Self-help terminology of building community attitudes and capacity. Problems of development become reduced to technical innovation. The issues of community structure, attitudes and capacity, as highlighted in the self-help model, no longer are central.

3.2.1.3 The Social Transformation Model

As with all theoretical and philosophical orientations, the three community work models discussed here are based on underlying assumptions about the nature of our world. The assumptions upon which the third model, the social transformation model, is built are quite different from the previous two. The first two start from the structuralfunctionalist assumption of unity within the community in which the interests of its members, both rich and poor, can be met simultaneously within existing social and political structures. The social transformation model, with its roots in Conflict Theory, rejects this notion of a harmonic community and focuses instead on the conflictual nature of power relations, in which the satisfaction of the needs of one group within a community may be in direct opposition with the interests of another (Gianotton and de Wit, 1987; Worsely, 1984; Rothman, 1968) This model holds that the structural components of society place limitations on the ability of some groups within a community to develop to their full potential (Akinpelu, 1981).

The perception that the institutional structures of society, rather than the psycho-social deficiencies of its members, are the main causes of underdevelopment leads to a focus on the need for basic changes in the allocation of power and resources. Proponents of this model criticize any theory which leaves intact the existing political and social structure as they are seen to only reinforce power of the privileged and fail to redistribute power to the masses. By being initiated from above, they are oriented toward the preservation of the status quo and do not, by design, address the needs and aspirations of the majority[29] (Wertheim, 1983). In the social transformation model, the needs of the community are seen in terms of the needs of an oppressed group within the community for greater access to power and equality. A principle objective of the development process is to create changes in the structures of society and the allocation of power within them.

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[29] In Wertheim's phraseology the term, "emancipation" is used to refer to the processes by which demands for inclusion in the rewards of society and for release "from both natural and man-made shackles" (p. 2) arise and are met from below

Those who hold economic and political power consolidate their control through a complex web of social institutions - the media, religious institutions, the government, the law and the educational system. The exploited are oppressed by their living and working conditions (Vio Grossi, 1981). They are, for the most part, dependent on the dominant power structure for their livelihood. Oppression assumes psychological and social dimensions which are reinforced by messages, both subtle and overt, transmitted by the social institutions. The oppressed, rather than the unequal power structure, are blamed for the their social conditions. The result is that a lack of information and the daily preoccupation with survival often prevent people from understanding what the power structure is, how it works and what it does to them (Mbilinti, 1982).

A second characteristic of this model centres on the view that the need for structural change is inextricably linked to the idea that the condition of the marginalized and the poor is, in addition to being a physical condition, a state of mind. Gran (1983) argues that the ability of the powerful within a society to define the "truth" creates a state of mind in which the marginalized accept their position as inevitable and the order and priorities of society as correct.

Freire's argument in Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), is similar. Here the needs of the community are seen in terms of the need of an oppressed group within the community for greater consciousness and control. These processes, which are part of the social relations between dominant and subordinate groups within society, create the second basic need as perceived by this orientation. This is the need for what Freire calls "conscientization". De Silva (as cited in Gran, 1983) defines conscientization as the process

> in which people, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects,achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-historical reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality (Gran, 1983:56)

Crucial to Freire's argument is that people must come to understand the forces that oppress them. Any education or process of social change must begin with the reality of individuals for they best understand their own reality. Freire maintains that every action represents the imposition of one individuals choice over another, transforming the consciousness of that person to that of the dominant individual. To break down this process people must first critically recognize its causes. Those that are oppressed must be the authors of their own change as they best know their own reality.

People must see their world as one which they can transform and these perceptions must be turned into action. This process is achieved by the dialectic process of praxis; that is reflection and action. People must act upon their own objective reality. People must become aware that they have power over their own lives and that they are the main agent of their own development.

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in the report entitled *Human Scale Development* (Max-Neef, 1989) outlines an orientation which would create conditions for a new praxis. This praxis is based on the satisfaction of basic human needs, increased self-reliance, on the development of organic articulations of people with nature and technology and on global process centred in local programs. It calls for a mixing of the personal with the social, of planning with autonomy, and of civil society with the state. The meeting of needs becomes not only a desired end but a process of social change in itself.

Such ideas are based on assumptions which strive towards progressive and sustainable development processes. The most crucial of all the assumptions is the recognition of the need to treat individuals not as an object-person, but rather a subject-person (Frank (1969). Development is about people and not about objects. Individuals, communities and societies are the centre of their own development.

Too often development works within a history which ignores the sub-history that makes it possible. The programs which are translated from development models neglect to learn and utilize the expertise already existing in the village or community. Development need to recognize the real value of the local knowledge which already exists. Any process which predetermines the goals bypasses the individuals in the program, and more often than not fills only the needs of those who planned the program.

People in a learning process should be committed to self-critical reflection on their aims and values. Individuals should critically look at the world, at themselves and the way the two interact. They must then act on this analysis. The process must be directly related to the reality of the individual and the community.

Peter Berger in his book Pyramids of Sacrifice (1974) uses the term 'cognitive participation' to express the idea that "those who are the objects of [development] policy have the opportunity to participate not only in specific decisions but in the definitions of the situation on which these decisions are based" (Berger, 1974:xiii). He bases this on the idea that to call for participation is to render 'cognitive respect' to all those who cannot claim the status of experts. Every human being, according to interpretive social science, is in possession of a world of their own and no one can interpret this world better than they themselves Anything but this results in cultural costs. Cognitive respect implies an equality of worlds of consciousness. It becomes cognitive participation at the level of praxis.

UNICEF (1982: 9) defines community development as:

> the involvement of the local population actively in decision-making concerning development projects or in their implementation. Finally, the involvement of the population in the physical work of implementing a project can hardly be considered as community participation unless there is at least some degree of sharing of decision with the community.

Such a definition can be interpreted as enabling people to participate in social change and growth, through their participation in planning and decision-making, and therefore in development. This definition implies that participation should take place at all levels of the implementation of development projects, including decision-making about the nature of the projects needed in their community. Therefore, the need for people's participation in selecting the development projects is acknowledged.

The two principle objectives of the Social Transformation model, then, are "consciousness raising" and structural change or power redistribution.

3.2.1.3.1 Participatory Research

Proponents of Participatory Research (PR) see research not only as a scientific practice but as a means of activating people in the process of their own development. The research activity itself is transformed into a "socially viable methodology for bringing about peoples' development" (Kiyenze, 1984:6). PR is concerned with the questions of who has the right to produce knowledge?, for whom is the knowledge generated? and how is this knowledge transformed into action that will benefit the community?

Traditional research and development-related social action are both top-down; that is initiative is taken by the scholar or administrator. There is a skewed power distribution between the researchers and the "subjects". The researcher has the complete power to decide upon the focus, methods and outcomes of the study. Similarly, top-down social action efforts are, almost by definition, characterized by concentration of power at the top. Too often, those with power decide what is good development, what strategies to use to make this information known and the methodologies to implement (Fernandes and Tandon 1981).

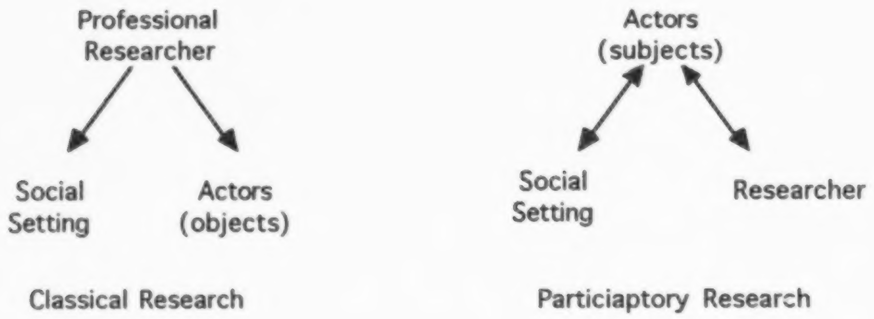
Consistent with arguments made by Freire, Fals-Borda (1984) states that the dialectic tension between academic and practical knowledge is removed through the Hegelian concept of praxis, allowing people to learn. The sum of the knowledge from the different sources allows one to acquire a much more complete picture of the reality one wants to transform. Therefore academic plus popular knowledge is indeed powerful and reduces the intellectual monopoly of the few over the many.

The action component of praxis, which is fundamental to social transformation, refer to any action that leads to structural social change. PR is linked closely with a particular field of action that intends to lead to change in the fundamental conditions that engender poverty, dependence and exploitation (Fals Borda, 1984)

PR is a tool which oppressed people can use to begin to take control of the economic and political forces which control their lives. Active participation in the PR process by the participants is one important step towards empowerment. Control ensures that new knowledge created arises from their own experience, relates to their perceived needs and is used for their benefit. Central to its concerns are the production of knowledge by marginalized people. Knowledge leading to empowerment because the people understand more clearly their situation and how it can be changed. It empowers because it builds confidence in their own knowledge and their ability to learn. This is echoed in calls by Chambers (1983) for "reversals of learning" and by de Zeutter (1986) for genuine two-way communication. Figure 5 illustrates how knowledge generation differs between classical research and PR.

According to Fals-Borda (1984), there is an obligation to return information to the communities in which it was gathered because the people involved continue to be its owners. They should determine how it is to be used and authorize its publication giving them some power over it. Others (Edwards, 1989; Gaventa and Horton, 1981) also concur that the monopoly of knowledge and the control of power must move into the hands of those struggling for change. Most poor people never have access to the information generated by those who study for them in order to help them. The process of change and understanding of the world should happen simultaneously.

FIGURE 5: Control over Knowledge-Generation Process
(Adapted from Tandon, 1981)


Professional Researcher
Social Setting
Actors (objects)
Classical Research
Actors (subjects)
Social Setting
Researcher
Particiaptory Research

Definitions of research problems, which reflect historically established structures, fundamentally shape and constrain results of inquiry. Problem definitions influence data collected, the results, the solutions proposed and the responsibilities assigned for the problem itself. Ryan (1976) argues that social science often blames the victim in the initial problem definition and points out that agenda control by dominant groups can turn problems into non-issues that never become part of the public choice process. Researchers claim that problems are defined in traditional social science research on conceptual and methodological grounds, thus disregarding that the politics of knowledge dictate that certain concepts and knowledge structures are privileged as being more 'legitimate' and important than others. In addition, problem identification may be the result of governmental or corporate interests with investments in problem solutions (Tandon, 1981).

There are several distinguishing characteristics of PR with regard to problem identification. Perhaps most crucial is that the problem under study and the decision to study it, have origins in the community affected by the problem. The goal of the research is political or social change derived from the information gathered. As part of the process, it is essential that local people control the process of problem definition, information gathering and decisions about action following from the information. Finally, local people and professional researchers are equals in the research process. They are both researchers and learners. Problem definition in PR is influenced by the traditions commitment to "real" problems, for a variety of interest groups may be affected by research results (Vio Grossi, 1981).

Participatory researchers are explicit about client contributions to problem definition. They start with the assumption that oppression is a central problem. This assumption has several implications. First, it assumes that PR clients will define problems differently than dominant groups. Secondly, authority and resources are controlled by other interest groups, so that dominant interest groups can be expected to resist or attack problem definitions that threaten either these resources or their authority. Problems tend to be analyzed in terms of community and social structures. Researchers draw on the intellectual traditions of sociology, political sciences and economics as well as group individual and group theory. They are also influenced by the cultural context of work of poor people, and so conceive of problems in terms of resource inequities, dependence, and oppression. PR, consistent with social transformational views, falls within the confines of conflict theories of society that emphasize fundamental differences of interests among social groups and the dynamics of oppression and change. Emphasis is on large-scale structural forces, conflicts of interest, inequalities, and changes that reduce oppression. It is important to note that PR does not imply that traditional sociological and anthropological methods should be discarded, but they must be consistent with the basic tenets of community control (Brown and Tandon, 1983).

The way problems are defined creates the political and economic contexts of inquiry and participatory researchers ally themselves with oppressed groups and opponents of established authority. Consequently, they often find resources and authoritative supports set up against them.

3.2.2 Basic Change Strategies

3.2.2.1 The Self-Help Model

Change strategies within the self-help model are presented by Benne and Chin (1976) in their description of "Normative Re-educative" strategies. The five elements of these strategies are:

1. Emphasis is on the client system and the client's involvement in working out solutions
2. Problems are not assumed to be technical
3. Relationships with the change agents are mutual and collaborative, starting from the here and now
4. Nonconscious elements are brought to the fore
5. Behavioral sciences and "people technology" are as important as "thing technology" (Benne and Chin, 1976).

In these strategies, modifications in action and behavior are brought about by normative changes, involving knowledge, information, attitudes, values, skills and significant relationships. The strategies adopted by the Self-help model have typically emphasized leadership training, community participation in problem solving and the provision of opportunities for community members to learn how to implement and evaluate programs which meet their interests as stated by various authors (Rothman, 1968); Cary, 1970; Havelock, 1978). The primary focus is the development process and on the community worker's personal contact with the community.

The relationship between community and worker in the Self-help model is based on the worker building relationships by establishing communication on a level comprehensible and meaningful to the community. By encouraging a systematic discussion of the problems, the worker guides community members in thinking and reasoning about the most important issues first (Cary, 1970). The result, which may take some time, should be one of community members agreeing on what needs to be done.

At this point the focus of the process shifts to how the action is to be taken. The worker helps on the description of a program and needed resources. Throughout this process the community members learn new skills, form new attitudes and acquire knowledge which is used in the action (Roberts, 1979)

As implementation begins the worker participates in the action as one of the community members. He or she must, however, also maintain enough objectivity to be able to support the process when the necessary interactions begin to fail. Cary (1970) claims that this role should be minimal since "the commitment and social relations should have developed to the degree that people will voluntarily perform the roles in the action process." (p. 121).

The self-help model's image of the community as an harmonic whole leads to strategies from which the notion of conflict has been completely eliminated. It assumes that the community can work together for the benefits and interests of all its members (Worsley, 1984; Gianotten, 1987; Rothman, 1968); conflict and confrontation are rejected as legitimate means of effecting change. Ahmed and Coombs (1974) claim that the problem solving strategy is a basic repudiation of strategies of power and conflict. The focus of community work tends to be the whole geographic community or locality rather than an oppressed segment therein. As Rothman makes clear, the locality development model is concerned with all groups in the community and focuses on the "unity of community life" (Rothman, 1968 citing Dunham, 1950). For those theorists who, like the social transformationists, believe that the focus of community work should be on oppressed groups within society and that it must use conflict strategies to change power relations, the Community Development model is inadequate.

3.2.2.2 The Technical Assistance Model

In the technical assistance model the underlying rationale that people are guided by reason and that the needs of communities are best understood in substantive and generally technological terms, leads to two types of change strategies. Both of them have a strong emphasis on scientific research and investigation (Benne and Chin, 1976). The first type includes those which attempt to raise the technical expertise of communities through the diffusion of technical innovation and technical training. Acquisition of technical skill and expertise is seen as sufficient in and of itself to stimulate development (Ahmed and Coombs, 1974; Roberts, 1979)

The second type of strategy focuses on provision of direct service through creation of the necessary physical and organizational infrastructure. These strategies rely on strong central planning and the manipulation of large organizations and bureaucracies in order to address complex issues (Shrivastava, 1982). One of the specific strategic manifestations of this approach is what Hyden (1986) refers to as "integrated development". The centrally planned restructuring in the 1960s and 1970s in Colombia were part of this orientation. Hyden suggests that the inadequacy of the "trickle down' approaches and the slow pace at which diffusion strategies were capable of effecting change led many governments to turn to centrally planned restructuring and to some form of redistribution. While centralized power is an important ingredient of the social planning elements of this orientation and is justified on the basis of its contributions to efficiency and coordination, Hyden argues that its efficacy should not be overrated since attitudes and knowledge cannot be coerced.

Om Shrivastava (1982) identifies several elements which are characteristic of the Technical Assistance model. There is a heavy reliance on modern technology and an extensive organizational structure is generally required to make these inputs available. Another element is that technically trained people are needed to disseminate the new information. A key concern is that typically there is no expectation that a critical assessment of the social, economic, political and cultural reality will accompany the infusion of modern technology, nor that rural people will have an important part in the strategy. "Development of people is hardly emphasized as an end goal in itself" (p. 3). These strategies "reduce the problem of development to a problem of technological innovation" (Gianotton and de Wit, 1987: p. 137).

3.2.2.3 The Social Transformation Model

There are two types of change strategies associated with the social transformation model. The first type involves those strategies that are aimed at the direct appropriation of social and political power, while the second type focus of the creation of an awareness among people that change is needed and is possible.

Benne and Chin (1976) refer to the first type as "power coercive" strategies. They are aimed at directly amassing power to alter the structure of societal relations. These strategies take the form of mass political actions, of legislative measures and of political lobbies (Rothman, 1968). The idea of people needing to organize in order to make demands and back then up with significant pressure runs throughout the writing of Gianotten and de Wit(1987), in their experience in the organization of rural people in Peru, and of Alinsky (1971) in his work with "Peoples' Organizations". There is the belief that marginalized people, when united around issues, have at their disposal the means to seize power and create change.

These strategies represent a clear break with the "harmonic community" view. Kettner et al (1985) say that conflict is one of the post powerful tools for less influential members of the community. This conflict may come about as people attempt to change existing organizations (Alinsky, 1971) or as they focus of the creation of alternative institutions (Gran, 1983; Gianotton and de Wit. 1987; Paerregaard, 1987).

The second types of strategies are those aimed at the educational or conscientization needs which come in several forms.

Freire (1970) proposes what he calls "problematization", a dialogue problem-posing process. This process, developed in the field of literacy training, calls for the learner and the educator to explore together, in a horizontal relationship, themes from the experience of the learner. In Latin America the ideas of conscientization have emerged in programs of popular education (Brandao, 1984). Within this context popular education is understood as a form of political education which constitutes a tool for the development of class consciousness (Brandao, 1984; Sulca, 1984).

While the definition provided by Brandao and Sulca reinforces popular education's class orientation, some writers are critical of it for what they perceive to be its failure to explicitly address class conflict. Lovett (1983) and Repo (1977), drawing on a Marxist perspective of theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, argue for a strategy which places greater emphasis on the class analysis. Lovett (1983) argues that Freire is plagued by what he calls "existential ambiguity" (p. 142), leaving the door open for any kind of education and providing no direction for constructing positive social change. Lovett calls for more rigid specification of definite bodies of knowledge and principles of inquiry which fit the purpose of transformation.

3.2.2.3.1 Participatory Research

PR is composed of three inter-related processes: 1) the collective investigation of problems and issues with the active participation of the constituency in the entire process; 2) the collective analyses, in which the constituency develops a better understanding, not only of the problems at hand but also of the underlying structural causes of the problem; and 3) the collective action by the constituency aimed at short-term and long-term solutions to these problems (Brown and Tandon, 1983).

Processes most closely related to investigation, analysis or action can be identified separately in any PR activity, but each process incorporates aspects of the others. PR begins with people's concrete experiences and situations and moves to include both theoretical analyses and action aimed at change (Campos, 1990). Critical evaluation of the success or failure of action deepens awareness of the concrete reality which people face.

Consistent with the social transformation model, PR is also an educational approach to social change. Freire (1970) maintains that every action represents the imposition of one individual's choice over another, transforming the consciousness of that person to that of the dominant individual. To break down this process people must first critically recognize its causes. Through action they can create a new situation, one leading to the pursuit of a fuller humanity. This occurs when the widespread need to be free is felt by the oppressed. The jump from accepting this situation to feeling the need for freedom is crucial.

PR has developed from social change efforts in developing countries, in which oppression, poverty and conflict are common. Power and resources are highly concentrated and as poor people come into increased contact with the outside world, they begin to challenge the legitimacy of those concentrations.

Participatory researchers view the production and dissemination of information as an intervention in a social and political process. They recognize the importance of political interventions to reduce inequalities in society and to increase the ability of relatively powerless groups to improve their situation (Vio Grossi, 1981; Campos, 1990).

The significant difference between the traditional and participatory approaches is seen in their outcome. Traditional approaches are concerned with quantitative outcomes and goal-directed action. PR gives greater importance to qualitative data and in addition to goal-oriented action, there is emphasis on process-oriented action. The success of research is not seen only through its publication but in what happens during the research. Similarly, the outcomes of participatory social action are not measured in aggregate terms such as GNP or birth and death rates, but are viewed in qualitative terms. Outcomes take the form of participatory action characterized by an equal distribution of power, reliance on local resources, continued control by the people and qualitative human outcomes (Vio Grossi, 1981).

PR seeks research outcomes that will change the status quo meaning that the researchers, their clients and their opponents all have a vested interest in these outcomes. Opponents often monopolize formal authority and resources; researchers have training and expertise; client groups have information, energy and time. The research outcomes must be of benefit to the client groups. Participatory researchers explicitly join one set on actors in a social system fragmented by conflicting interests. They seek fundamental transformations of societies. The action component of praxis, which is fundamental to social transformation, does not refer to any action at all but one that relates specifically to activity that leads to structural social change (Gianotten and de Wit, 1987). PR is linked closely with a particular field of action that intends to lead to change in the fundamental conditions that engender poverty, dependence and exploitation. (Campos, 1990)

In addition, the action focus differentiates PR form other forms of research in that participatory research is intended to be of direct and immediate benefit to a community. The research process is under local control. People learn in the process of doing and are not merely applying that which they know already.

3.2.3 The Community-Worker Relationship

3.2.3.1 The Self-Help Model

The role of the community worker and his or her relationship to the community is described by Rothman (1968) as "enabler". Benne and Chin (1976) say that the "change agent must learn to work mutually and collaboratively..." (p. 33). This suggests that, though the development worker should take the lead in stimulating and motivating change through community participation, they do not take the role of expert in regard to substantive problems. Instead they aid the community in initiating a process of problem solving. The role of decision making must be left up to the community. Roberts (1979) contends that it is primarily in this area of problem solving and facilitation that the worker must demonstrate relevant expertise, since the community worker cannot, generally, claim any other source of power.

While this participatory relationship may be present in the ideal model of self-help, many critics maintain that in practice it has rarely been employed. Midgley (1987), de Zeutter, (1989), and Korten (1980) claim that within the international context of the self-help model, meaningful participation by community members has been the exception. They argue that the failure of the Self-help model to live up to the expectations which accompanied it has been due, in large measure, to this lack of participation.

3.2.3.2 The Technical Assistance Model

The role of community members and community workers in the technical planning model are the most clearly differentiated of any model. Authorities and experts control change. Typical of strategies in this model is the top-down articulation of problem and solution. While community participation may be part of the response, it will generally not include involvement in the definition of the problem or the planning of the solution, nor will it be done from a normative perspective but rather from a "sense of utility" (Rothman, 1974: p. 30). Though within many centrally planned programs and projects of diffusion there is lip-service paid to two-way communication, de Zeutter (1986) argues that it rarely occurs. Max-Neef (1986) describes the from of communication in this model as analogous to an umbrella in which all the spokes arrive at the centre to which they bring their concerns and from which they receive their direction.

In criticizing the relationships developed through the technical assistance model, Gran (1983) uses the example of the Tanzanian ujamaa[30] to argue that the results of centrally planned development projects is frequently an alliance between rural elites and sponsoring governments or agency officials. He maintains that the lack of authentic cognitive respect for rural people is the central reason for their non-cooperation. In his opinion it is impossible to create participatory relations from the top down. Chambers (1983) supports this idea, pointing to biases against the participation of the poor in centrally designed projects which influence workers to work in and for the centres of power.

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[30] The "ujamaa" were scale efficient socialist villages established by the Nyere government in 1967 in response to the need to extend social and economic opportunities in a context of inadequate national resources

Batten (1975) clearly emphasizes the dehumanizing of the development process through this approach when he states:

> ... the agency...decides... whatever it thinks people need or ought to value or ought to do for their own good, and sometimes how they ought to behave. These decisions become the agency's goals for people. the agency will then provide whatever staff, equipment, premises, and programmes it thinks are needed to meet the needs or interests of the people it wishes to help, in the hope that they will avail themselves of the services or activities it provides. This will bring then into contact with the agency's workers who will then try to influence people in relation to the agency's ideas of betterment for them... The agency and its workers think, decide, plan, organize, administer, and provide for people. Always the main initiative, and the final say, remains with them (p. 5)

Such approaches, according to Frank (1969), also naively assume that decision makers need only change a few particular variables to create change rather than look at structures affecting the system. An example of this view is the 'stage' or 'take-off' theory developed by W.W. Rostow which sees underdeveloped regions falling into an earlier stage of a developed region's history. Such assumptions are based on an ignorance or on the negation of the history of the underdeveloped region. These stages of growth do not relate to the past or present reality of the underdeveloped region whose development they are proposing to guide.

Rather than the people of underdeveloped regions inquiring and removing the causes of their underdevelopment, the Technical Assistance model makes the assumption that they should wait and welcome the diffusion of development and the implementation of government programs from outside. It also fails to include the role of power in the equation. Capital and technology represent power and few regions will give away their advantage by sharing the same information or resources which gives it that advantage.

Perhaps most importantly, accompanying any diffusion is the passing on of selective values that serve only to perpetuate the systems and structure of underdevelopment because it is in the interest of the developed regions and controlling sectors of the population.

3.2.3.3 The Social Transformation Model

In the social transformation model, the role of the community worker is seen in a variety of ways, ranging from the horizontal mutual learning relationship described by Freire (1973) to the more directive educator called for by Lovett (1983) and Repo (1977). Freire's work, which has become a model for a great number of popular education and development projects, calls for a fundamental altering of the relationship between the teacher and the learner. Whereas the teacher, or community worker is traditionally seen as an authority who deposits information in a "banking" fashion, and provides services or directs projects, he or she must learn to associate with the community in a mutual learning relationship. The redistributive objectives of the transformational model demand reversals in the relationship between community members and community workers which allow the community members to be seen as a "constituent" or an "employer" of the community worker (Rothman, 1968).

At the heart of the social transformation orientation then, is a change in roles and the creation of a horizontal relationship which values previously marginalized groups. Still, the domination of marginal groups through cultural oppression[31] necessitates critical analysis. The community worker must not abdicate his or her responsibility by responding to the whims of community members in isolation from the socio-political perspective of class analysis (Brookfield, 1981). The worker should be prepared to contribute to the conscientization process by attempting to illuminate the historical, cultural and socio-political context. He or she should be in a position to contribute to the learning of the community just as he or she must be prepared to learn form the experience of the community.

3.2.3.3.1 Participatory Research

A key assumption of PR is that the research will lead to change by the people who do it. PR is distinguished from other research in that it assumes that change will come not by people who read the works of others but through the mobilization of people specifically those affected by the people directly affected the problem under study through the process of research. Research and action form a continuum and are part of a single process of political change (Brown and Tandon, 1983).

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[31] By cultural oppression I am referring to the phenomenon of dominant groups dictating the actions and perceptions of the oppressed, as identified by Freire, Illich, Gran, Kellough, Carnoy and others.

These characteristics distinguish PR from survey research and other methodologies in several ways. First, there is more emphasis on researchers as learners. It is not a process whereby some people accumulate information about other people. The subject-object dichotomy is bridged and the reflexive nature of human interaction whereby a person is affected by those they intend to affects acknowledged and applied to research professional as well. PR is a dialogue over time and a mobilization of human resources for information gathering that may lead to action.

Ideologies link values and realities, suggesting cause and effect linkages that make purposeful action possible. Values and ideologies of particular relevance to research are drawn from professional training and experience as well as from the larger cultures in which researchers have lived. Values and ideologies are not always recognized as such by their adherents. If individuals know nothing of alternative perspectives, they will likely assume that "all reasonable people" have similar commitments (Cuoto, 1987).

Although values and ideology-free observations and analysis may be possible in the physical sciences, achieving complete "objectivity" in the social sciences is impossible, particularly if those sciences purport to provide guidance to solving social problems. The values researchers hold and the ideological perspectives that guide them exert powerful influences on choices they make in the course of inquiry.

Perhaps most fundamental is the relationship between the values of the researchers and those of community members. They must believe in the basic strengths of people, in democratic values and posses the behavior skills required to encourage and sustain participation.

Myrdahl (1970) pointed out the importance of social scientists stating their biases openly rather than behind a false front of supposedly objective truth when he stated that "Research is always and by logical necessity based on moral and political valuations, and the researcher should be obliged to account for them explicitly."(p. 74)"

When people take an active part in all the aspects of a development project, they will collectively consider it as truly their own. Therefore, participation creates a sense of responsibility and solidarity among the people involved in a project. Participation enables the various projects in a region to utilize indigenous knowledge and expertise to the maximum extent. In this sense, participatory research views indigenous knowledge as an important cultural heritage to be improved by adding into it some elements of modern technology. Indigenous knowledge is important as it is based on locally available resources rather than on imported inputs and skills. In addition, PR creates conscientization among the members of the community concerned. Participation can help people to understand better the conditions and nature of the constraints which mitigate against their development and seek appropriate solutions (UNICEF,1982).

3.3 A Framework for Analysis of the Participatory Practices of the FSI

The information presented thus far has focused on the role of participation in three different community development models according to how they address social change strategies, community needs and objectives, and finally, the relationship between community workers and community members.

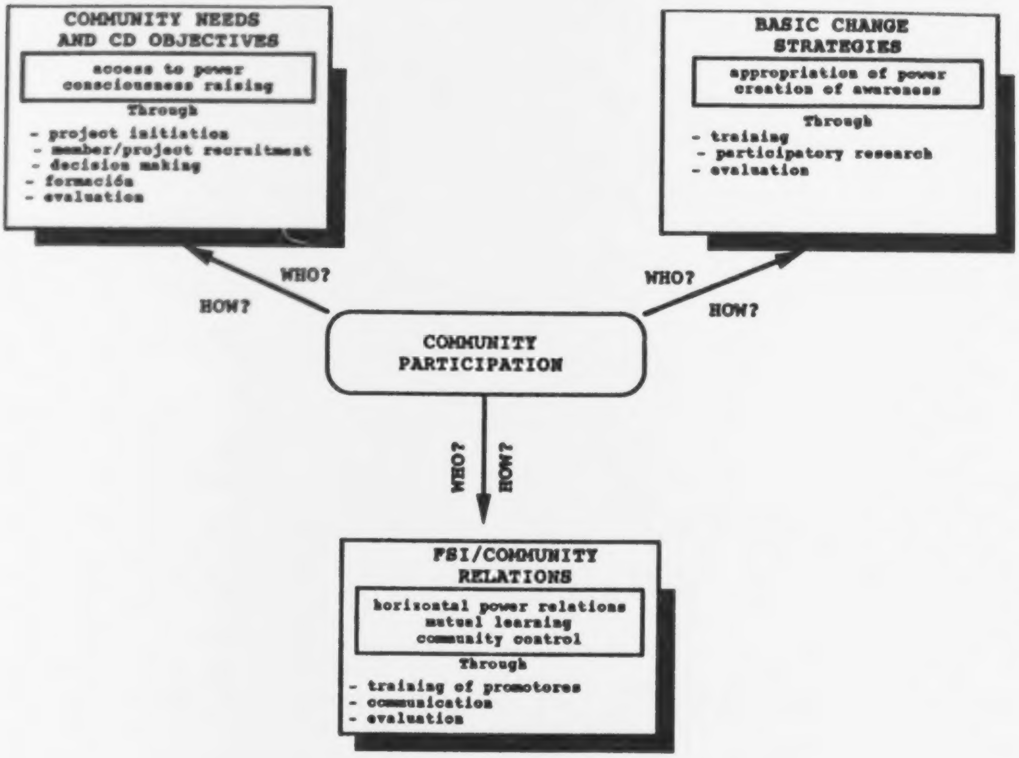
The social transformation model most approximates the approach adopted by the FSI. While in some cases it might be argued that there is little to separate the ST model from the self-help approach, the philosophical basis of the ST model, particularly its call for reversals of roles and its goals of structural change and redistribution of power, are reflected in the mandate, objectives and strategies of the FSI.

Community control is a fundamental requirement of the Social Transformation Model and by extension Participatory Research. The FSI which actively initiates PR programs must, therefore, subscribe to the tenets of PR, necessitating community participation in all aspects of the work they do both in the communities, as well as in the internal workings of the organization itself. Community member control, through their participation, must be at the centre of all processes and practices.

Describing and assessing the degree to which community control and participation occurs in the areas outlined in the thesis objectives, is the central theme of this study. The framework that will facilitate this process must describe the activities in which community participation occurs and answer the questions of: 1) who participates? and 2) how do they participate or, in other words, what is the nature of their participation? Implicit in these two questions are the issues of why people participate and how the FSI solicits and maintains participation.

Figure 6 outlines this framework by highlighting the relationship between participation and the three variables being used, as well as how they relate to the questions of who participates and how.

FIGURE 6: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING PARTICIPATION AT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE FUNDACION SAN ISIDRO


COMMUNITY NEEDS AND CD OBJECTIVES
access to power
consciousness raising
Through
- project initiation
- member/project recruitment
- decision making
- formación
- evaluation
BASIC CHANGE STRATEGIES
appropriation of power
creation of awareness
Through
- training
- participatory research
- evaluation
WHO?
HOW?
WHO?
HOW?
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
WHO?
HOW?
FSI/COMMUNITY RELATIONS
horizontal power relations
mutual learning
community control
Through
- training of promotores
- communication
- evaluation

By describing and analyzing the FSI's participatory practices as they relate to the three key variables described above, as components of the social transformation Model and participatory research, these key questions can be addressed. Thus it is possible to assess participation in the areas outlined in the objectives.

The first variable focuses on community needs and the objectives of the community development work. Through exploring this area it is possible to address the issues of how needs and objectives are determined and who and how community members participate in this process. It also provides an opportunity to investigate the relationship between the FSI and the communities in which they work, and how this is reflected not only in their community work, but in organizational decision making processes.

A review of change strategies permits the study of the FSI personal development programs, technical training programs as well as how these change strategies are transformed into community development programs and activities, and what the role of community members are in this process.

An assessment of FSI-community relations will allow for the study of training programs for the *promotores*, strategies for engaging the community in development activities, how communication is maintained between the organization and the communities, and the effectiveness of evaluation processes. These issues are paramount given the key role the promotores occupy in all the work done by the FSI.

This process will help determine if the FSI do what they say they do, if not, why, as well as what works, what doesn't, and in the broader sense if the Social Transformation Model and Participatory Research are viable community development models.

The following chapters will describe and analyze the nature of participation in the community development work done by the FSI and the strategies employed to solicit and maintain it.

4.0 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the various methods of data collection and analysis utilized in this research, along with key concerns and problems associated with them. In addition, a more general discussion highlighting constraints as well as key advantages experienced while collecting the data, will be presented.

4.2 Data Needs

A variety of data was required to adequately address the objectives of this research. It is necessary to understand the cultural and historical context in which the research takes place, including the physical characteristics of the study region. It is also critical to clearly understand the objectives which guide the work done at the FSI, the structures developed to implement these objectives, and most importantly the people who are part of these structures. This determines the parameters for inquiry by focusing the questions to be asked, and the type of data required as articulated by the thesis objectives. It also provides guidance to the analysis of the data, thus binding together the information collected through the various data collection methods utilized.

4.3 Sources of Data

The quality of the information collected is only as meaningful as the sources of that data. In this study various sources were availab and utilized.

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Literature provided a rich source of information. There was access to minutes of meetings, to evaluations, workshops notes, policies and documents outlining mandate, purpose and objectives.

The primary source of information, however, came from people - community members, *promotores*, members of the executive committee and board, staff and members of external organizations. This study is about participation and only through access to those involved in the work of the FSI, could their participatory practices be accurately assessed with any credibility.

Access to people took various forms. Individual and group interviews were administered as well as many hours of informal discussion with people were held. During the course of the field work opportunities were taken to participate in a wide range of activities such as conferences organized by the FSI, strategic planning meetings, organizational evaluation workshops, board meetings, stays at the FSI-run farms and accompanying field workers to communities. I was also fortunate to be involved in an evaluation of the FSI by an external funding agency.

By organizing a workshop on group dynamics and animation skills it was possible to became one of the 'team' in a sense. Facilitating meetings also provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and skills and increased my 'legitimacy'. It also led to a better understanding of the community development practices utilized by the FSI staff and volunteers.

An assessment of training and research was also done by attending internal FSI meetings, as well as observing decision making processes.

4.4 Data Collection Procedures

Whereas quantitative material was used, this study is qualitative in nature, utilizing a variety of methods for gathering the required information. Although it is difficult to separate into distinct methods, the field work may be broadly divided into the following categories: 1) analysis of written documentation; 2) key informant interviews; 3) participant observation including participation in, and facilitation of workshops and meetings; and 4) focus group interviews.

Frequently these methods overlapped or were employed at the same time. For example, several interviews were held with people while they were engaged in physical work allowing for observation in addition to the discussion. While talking to a group of people it was possible to both gather first hand information and observe how decisions were made and information was communicated.

While pre-determined questions were asked, it would be misleading to state that all the information presented here was gained or learned through designed inquiry or method. Often it was chance that provided the best opportunities. While I may have guided interviews in an attempt to get specific information, often the 'flow' of the interview depended on either the interest of the person being interviewed, or by me pursuing a relevant comment in-depth. In this sense I allowed those being interviewed to control some of the process and a great deal of the direction that my study took. This permitted me to incorporate some of the underlying principles of Participatory Research and made the research relevant for those involved. I never lost sight, however, of the need to gather enough focused and pertinent information so as not to make the study so general it would be of little use.

Often situations determined whether I took a more passive observer role or a more active participant role. During initial meetings with community members I would introduce myself and explain and answer questions about what I was doing. I became more active during subsequent visits in order to acquire a fuller understanding of the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and other underlying reasons that gave meaning to the actions and decisions of the people I met. On occasion I participated in the work community members were engaged in, which helped me to better understand them and the community processes they were part of. These situations ranged from planting several hectares of potatoes in one community to facilitating meetings in another.

Aside from the review of the minutes of meetings, extensive field notes were taken. However, only in certain occasions, such as during FSI staff meetings, were notes recorded in the presence of community members, either during meetings or during interviews. In addition, over 35 hours of taped interviews were recorded on cassettes.

4.4.1 Document Review

Analysis of the available documentation is most appropriate when the researcher is limited to documentary evidence (Holsti, 1969). It permits the reduction and classification of available material into smaller more easily analyzed elements (Babbie, 1986:163).

As mentioned previously I had access to a multitude of documentation. The study of the literature provided insight into the historical development of the FSI, its community work practices and a detailed account of the PR work that the FSI had done, and was at the time, involved with. In addition, a review of literature provided the information necessary for the contextual background of the thesis including the geography, culture and history of the study region.

The information provided through memos, evaluations done by the *Universidad Javeriana* and the FSI, and all written reports both internal and published, were reviewed and analyzed and proved highly beneficial to the study. In addition to giving an historical context to the study, it helped clarify interview questions and provided direction as to where specific information could be obtained, as well as the people who could provide it.

A key source of written data came from the minutes of meetings which assisted in the formation of the questionnaire. The information was broken down and classified into the following categories: 1) type of information recorded; 2) the person recording the information; 3) if the information included in the previous meetings minutes was verifyed by those who had attended; 4) any actions that resulted from the meetings and who was responsible to carry them out; and 5) whether the actions identified in the previous meetings were in fact carried out.

As a result of the classification and analysis of the written documentation, it was possible to further refine and focus the study, and clarify what types of questions were appropriate for use in interviews. These questions would help to assess community participation and control in problem identification, information, subsequent action plans and evaluation.

There was some difficulty in doing an adequate analysis of written material as some of the existing documentation was not complete. For example, in the case of the minutes of all meetings, several sets of minutes had been lost or misplaced, making it difficult to check for consistency between meetings.

The primary limitation of this literature review and analysis centres on the selection and interpretation of the material chosen from meetings to be recorded, the missing data mentioned above and the specific perspectives reflected in written reports.

4.4.2 Participant Observation

Over the last few years participant observation and other ethnographic research methods have received considerable interest and attention in social science research literature (Wolcot, 1985; Owens, 1982). This interest stems, in part, from a recognition that although quantitative research methods are a valuable way to describe and measure the different kinds of activities groups participate in, they do not provide, or reveal, the meaning of the activities to the people themselves. Ethnographic research methods attempt to go beyond the 'numbers' in order to examine the underlying reasons that give meaning to what people do. In this sense, an emphasis is placed on the actual behavior, and the way it is personally and socially expressed, rather than on the analysis of the peoples' behavior and statements per se.

There are, however, certain limitations of any research, based on the the extent to which the findings are reliable and valid. These kinds of concerns are particularly relevant to ethnographic research methodologies as well, because there is no standard procedure for another researcher to follow in order to replicate, confirm, and assess the reliability of the results. In short, because ethnographic research methods rely on personal observations and experiences with the people and setting they wish to learn about, the results are not necessarily reliable because a different researcher might have quite different experiences while studying the same group of people or setting. In respect of this limitation, it is essential for the ethnographer to provide as much detail, and to describe the circumstances and context that lead to certain observations. This allows others to critically assess the reliability of the results relative to how the situation is defined.

A further problem in using participant observation research methods is the tendency to treat the community as a homogeneous unit. Unfortunately, this often unwittingly disregards how even the smallest communities are divided on many issues. When this occurs, it may lead to over representation of some interests, or under-representation of others. Yet, even if this latter problem is not apparent, the participant observer is often unlikely to provide a convincing argument that he or she has maintained a neutral impartial stance (Matthews, 1976:5). If the researcher can be shown to have a vested interest in the research or phenomena they study, then these interests may be sufficient reason, to treat the recommendations or policy implications of the particular field research with suspicion. It may also discredit the reliability and validity of the research findings.

In order to overcome these problems, many researchers incorporate some form of representative sampling to ensure coverage of the entire range of human behaviors, values and views that define a particular human population. However, even here, different researchers may have different interpretations of the same set of quantified data. Particular interpretations depend on such things as career aspirations, social status and previous experience (see, for example, Freeman and Hackman, 1975).

While these issues are endemic to all research utilizing participant observation research techniques, they must be looked at somewhat differently as they relate to this study. Foremost, the study does not attempt to describe populations at large but rather only those involved with the FSI. This is not meant to imply that the 'FSI population' is homogeneous and free from variations in values and attitudes amongst its members. In addition, participant observation is being used, in this case, to gain an understanding and to critically assess the community development practices used by the FSI.

Participant observation techniques were utilized in group meetings, in the various workshops and conferences I attended and facilitated, during physical labour, recreational activities, eating meals and community chores. These techniques were employed not only to describe the culture of those involved in the work, but also how people functioned within the community and the nature and role of their participation.

Participant observation was one link in the research methodological chain used in this study. Some of the inherent limitations were circumvented through subsequent discussions and interviews with community and organizational members, allowing for clarification and further inquiry.

4.4.3 Key Informant Interviews

Interviewing techniques, when properly administered, allow a researcher to develop a relationship with community members which enable them to gain a deeper understanding of a respondent's thoughts. They make possible a description of human activities and interactions which are essential for the examination of social processes and social structure.

Standard research strategy often involves the implicit assumption that the problem has been so clearly defined that it requires a very clear research design. If the nature of the problem is not clear, then a clear design may result in a spurious impression of scientific procedures. Most importantly, however, is that such a strategy is compatible only with survey research, where variables and relationships can be specified and measured using advanced statistical techniques.

Such a process is not easy to employ when dealing with data on social structure and processes, something better obtained through interviewing techniques. It is often impossible to establish the important variables prior to the field work and theoretical orientations may be misleading. There exists a conceptual problem; to develop a theoretical framework that enables the researcher to understand some aspects of social structure and to trace sequences of events and social processes, and to link together structure and process.

Interviews with key individuals such as community members, FSI staff and outside change agents were held in order to collect data based on the stated research objectives. In total, 23 key informants were interviewed resulting in over 35 hours of in-depth taped discussions.

The use of interviewing allows for the systematic gathering of essential information. There are several reasons why interviewing was preferred over other research methods such as questionnaire survey methods. First, high rates of illiteracy made it virtually impossible for self-administered questionnaires to be used. While it is possible to have community members administer the survey, it is necessary to account for the sensitivity people have to not being able to read and write. Also having a certain segment of the community administer a survey simply because of specific skills they have, sets up a situation whereby one group, by definition, is placed in a position of power over others. This can be problematic as it is very difficult for a researcher to be cognizant of the political intricacies of a community unless they have spent considerable time there.

The nature of the questions asked evolved from 'brainstorming' sessions I did prior to my departure, to the eventually specific questions used. As I became more familiar with the people, environment and the work being done, the questions became more focused. The need to re-evaluate research questions designed away from the research site (i.e. in Canada) does not, in a qualitative study, reduce the effectiveness of the research. In fact it makes the research stronger and much more relevant to those who are the focus of the study. This not only is good research practice, but is consistent with PR concepts and practice.

All the questions eventually used were reviewed by people at the FSI and researchers at the Universidad Javeriana in order to determine if a) the Spanish translation was clear and grammatically sound, b) to ensure the questions were written in a way that would avoid offending members of the community and c) the questions were applicable for gathering the desired information.

4.4.3.1 Issues Surrounding the Use of Key Informant Interviews

There are a wide range of issues that must be addressed when involved in an interviewing process which can bias responses and their interpretation, or in fact grossly distort the information gathered. In addition, when coupled with a participatory methodology, certain practices and assumptions on the part of the researcher can lead to serious political and social consequences for the community involved and its members.

When carrying out research in a different country, the researcher must be aware of potential difficulties that can arise from cultural differences or language problems. In the example of Colombia, it is not uncommon to have distinct cultural groups within the same region. There are often subtle, but significant differences in how specific groups utilize the language. It is, therefore, essential that the questions, the tone of the interview and, as participatory research requires, the results from the study be written and presented in a fashion which allows community members access.

As with participant observation, the researcher must be cognizant of the variability in the community, as no community is homogeneous. They cannot assume that interviews with any single individual represents a 'true picture'. Undoubtedly, in the proposed study, the various communities within the region are at least somewhat differentiated in terms of occupation, size of land holdings and other factors. These lines of differentiation tend to be associated with differences in perceptions and beliefs as to what is good for the community, and therefore with specific interest groups. In the case of this study, the results of the research are a reflection of those people interviewed only and not of the communities as a whole. The intent was to gain the various perspectives of those working within the FSI and the people they were working with, not the whole community.

The interview as a research method in survey research is unique in that it involves the collection of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. This direct interaction is a source of both advantages and disadvantages to the researcher. There exists the potential weakness of researcher bias. This may manifest itself through the ethnocentricity of the researcher. If the researcher remains in the area of the study for a long period of time they become subjected to the internal politics of the area and may unwittingly be supporting the interests of certain groups over others.

The interviewer may feel uncomfortable with the people or the environment in which they are interviewing. Their personal opinions may influence what they record or how they interpret responses. Difficulties may arise if the interviewer does not establish a rapport with the respondents or has stereotyped expectations of what people are like and what they will say. Interviews take a great deal of time. If a researcher is doing many of them, they may become bored with the process which can affect how the information is perceived and analyzed. In addition, interviewers must also be aware of where interviews are held, who is present and the length of the interview.

A potential problem is that community members may be suspicious of the researcher. Conversely, if they lack the information the interviewer is requesting, they may wish to please the interviewer and choose to provide incorrect information rather than none at all. Some bias may arise from the extra role characteristics of the interviewer that do not reflect interviewer behavior at all. It is inevitable that respondents will perceive interviewers not only as interviewers but also in terms of other role characteristics such sex, age, race and perhaps political or ethnic affiliation. The perceptions of these other characteristics does not necessarily mean they will cause respondents to behave differently, but the potential is there and must be recognized. (Rossi et all, 1983)

A key issue centres on the moral judgement applied by the researcher on behavior. They have to be clear on the distinction between *what is* and what *ought to be* and who the moral judgement represents; the researcher or the community.

4.4.3.2 The Interview Process

Part of each interview was structured and standardized so as to be consistent in the information collected from case to case. Structured questions are especially useful in that their formality facilitates access to information which respondents might have been reluctant to give unless directly asked. Respondents are often concerned over who may see the responses, how the information will be used and if there is any potential danger associated with responding.

The remainder of the interview was of an independent non-standardized nature. This serves several purposes: 1) it facilitates a more in-depth understanding of opinions and attitudes; and 2) should variations in respondents attitudes and opinions be identified through an analysis of the structured portion of the interview, some insights as to the causes may become clear through a more informal conversation.

Upon completing each individual interview, I immediately reviewed the tape and did a general categorization of the material. This allowed me to ensure I understood what was said and to ask for clarification when necessary. This was important because it ensured accuracy which when working in a different language is critical. The researcher must be sure that what was intended by the interviewee is what is understood by the researcher.

The interviewing process was, for the most part, successful. Most of those interviewed were open and willing to discuss whatever issues arose. Some people, such as those who were new to FSI programs, tended to be more suspicious and less communicative. The key limitation of the process was not so much the interviews themselves or who was interviewed, but rather who was not. It was virtually impossible to talk to community members that were not part of the FSI. They were shy and skeptical towards outsiders, and many were distrustful of the FSI because of its generally poor relationship with the local government and certain members in the church. This limitation is not critical because the study focuses on the practices used with people already involved with the organization. However, access to these people would have allowed for an analysis of the impact of the FSI within the whole community. It would have been insightful to analyze participation in light of who was not participating.

Combining the interview strategy along with the other methods allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the issues being researched. Through integrating different interview designs, the process becomes as important as the information. Discovery preceded measurement. The combination had the advantage of being reasonably "objective" while still permitting a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions and the reasons behind them. It provides a desirable combination of objectivity and depth, and permits obtaining valuable data that could not be successfully obtained by any other approach.

4.4.4 Focus Group Interviews

In order to better understand and evaluate the participatory practices used by the FSI, a number of focus group interviews were held. While not the predominant data collection method, these discussion provided insights into the questions and issues this thesis addresses.

The focus group interviews were not structured. As mentioned earlier much of the information gathering happened as much by chance as by design. While in some cases group discussions were spontaneous they remained focused, and addressed the specific themes of the thesis.

Group interviews or discussions allow the researcher the opportunity to gather diverse perspectives and definitions. This does not infer that an interview with ten people will yield ten times more information, but it will yield a more diversified array of responses and afford a more extended basis for suggesting interpretations of any given situation which is grounded in experience. Often, open and dynamic discussion helped to remind people of a wide range of pertinent ideas which served to 'round out' information gathered elsewhere and by different means. Group interviews also for observation on how people interacted between themselves, and with the FSI.

In a quantitative study many issues associated with group interviews affect the statistical analysis of the information retrieved.

While these concerns are not inherent to this study, these underlying issues can affect the results. Group size, for example, may affect the patterns of social interaction. Groups should not be so large as to preclude adequate participation nor should they be so small that they fails to provide substantially greater coverage than that of an interview with one person.

Another key consideration is the composition of the group. In the case of the groups that were interviewed for this study, concerns such as the social and intellectual homogeneity of those involved were not at issue. Key areas included cultural consideration and power relations, gender being the most predominant. Power relations already existed and resulted in some respondents carrying most of the discussion while others, primarily women, largely kept silent. In order to address this issue, individual interviews were held with those from the group, as well as separate discussions with the men and with the women. Responses were then compared to what was discussed when everyone was present.

Spatial arrangements can also appreciably affect spontaneity and the character of responses. The group interviews were informal and therefore no pre-arranged seating configuration was set up. Most often these discussion occured either while relaxing or around some organized work such as peeling potatoes or weeding the garden.

In addition to the strengths and weaknesses presented, many of the same issues associated with individual interviews hold true, such as researcher bias and the attempt by respondents to give the interviewer what it is they believe they want.

4.4.5 Strengths, Limitations and Constraints of Data Collection Procedures

Several issues and constraints were faced in doing this study. The most obvious was that of time. A good deal of time was required to get to know the study area and the people, and to understand the way the FSI was organized, how it functioned and its internal politics. Having more time to spend focusing on the study issues would clearly have been welcomed but was not possible given the available resources.

Another critical concern centres on issues associated with doing a cross-cultural study. Foremost, one must always be careful of ethnocentricity and its effect on judgements and analysis. Outsiders must be clear that they accurately understand the messages that are being transmitted. Throughout the research I continually verified my understanding of a situation with those around me.

Integration is always problematic, particularly for someone from another country. While the majority of the people form the UJ and the FSI, some of whom had over a decade of working in participatory research projects, were accustomed to constant evaluation of their work, the same openness was not shared by all community members. *Boyacá* is very conservative, with most people assuming a subservient attitude towards outsiders resulting from centuries of being considered backwards by the rest of the country. The character of the *Boyacense*[33] is not one of initial trust. This lack of trust is not only reserved for people from other countries, but is extended to those coming from different regions within Colombia itself. While the staff and long-time members of the FSI were very approachable, more time was needed for many of the community members to openly discuss issues. In some cases people would simply not talk. For the most part however, once trust was gained, the discussions were open and detailed. Fortunately, my familiarity with the people and the region aided in my integration. Involving myself in the day to day life and in the communal work cycle at the FSI farms and the communities I visited, also allowed me to fit in more quickly.

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[33] someone from the department of *Boyacá*

Except for very few occasions, I lived and ate at the FSI farms. While it might be argued that not living directly with families affected my ability to carry out the research, staying with families for extended periods of time would not have given me the diverse access I had to different communities. In addition, the FSI has a policy of not staying with families because of the cost and inconvenience to them. By visiting a number of communities, observing how decisions were made and then seeing how these decisions were introduced and incorporated into the overall decision-making structure of the FSI, I was able to directly address the issue of community involvement. This provided a larger number of cases or examples than had I concentrated on only one community.

It was virtually impossible to gain access to all people in the community, as many were not involved in the FSI sponsored programs and in fact, for various reasons were distrustful of them. Also time and the type of study would not have allowed me to talk to a large number of people. One of the parameters I had initially set out in the study, was the involvement in FSI programs of the most marginalized community members. I felt confident that I did talk to many of the most marginalized because it was these groups with whom the FSI worked.

I had little access to community power bases and local government officials. These sectors were rarely in agreement with the work done by the FSI. In fact, in many cases they were actively attempting to discredit and disrupt FSI work. The study concentrates on those involved with the FSI rather than the perception of the FSI by communities as a whole.

One of the great benefits I accrued in doing the research was the opportunity to assess a participatory research program operating in communities. Some of the assumptions I had made prior to my fieldwork and the way in which I had set up my methodology (e.g. the types of question I wanted to ask) were not entirely accurate or appropriate. I was forced to re-examine and to modify, based on my observations.

As a researcher committed to the tenets of Participatory Research, it was essential that the method I employed be consistent with the fundamental requirement of participation. While I attempted to adhere to this principle, it became clear that various research techniques would need to be utilized and that total participation was not possible. I do not believe this conflict with participatory methods, and at no time were people mislead as to the intention of my research.

As much as possible, participatory methods were employed so that people had direct involvement in my research. For example, community and FSI members decided that I should develop a slide/tape show focusing of community development processes used by the FSI. This influenced the type of information I had to gather and insured that some of the information was returned to community members. It also meant that the research would be of value to the FSI.

4.5 Processing and Analysis of Data

The majority of the information was processed and analyzed after I returned to Canada. The one exception to this was the literature review, which was analyzed as described earlier in this chapter.

Upon my return to Canada the data collected was reviewed in order to highlight predominant trends and to place the material into areas of focus. The information was then categorized according to the established analytical framework (as found in chapter 3). The information was them further broken down to address the specific issues of each of these categories, giving form to the results and discussion chapters of the thesis. The analytical framework also determined the type of literature to be reviewed in order to give the necessary theoretical and historical context to the study.

4.6 Writing Procedure for the Research Report

The information included in this thesis is presented in various forms. The contextual background to the study is descriptive in nature based on a review of relevant literature, as is an overview of the study setting. The results of the study are presented according to the categories outlined in the framework. Each category addresses the thesis objectives by means of three steps. The first step is to describe, according to the category, what the FSI says it proposes to do. The second step will involve presenting the data collected, as it relates to the issues raised. These are presented in chapter five. The final step, found in chapter six, will analysis as to whether the practice reflects the theory and if not, why?

4.7 Problems of Validity and Reliability

As with all research, there is the concern with the validity and reliability of the data presented. Reliability refers to the probability that an observation, if repeated at a different time by the same person or at the same time by another observer, will give the same result. This assumes that conditions are such that the nature of the object or property of the object being observed has not changed with repeated observation.

The nature of the research does not lend itself to tests of reliability as it is at no time static. Therefore, one may have to assume reliability by examining the data collection methods. In addition, if one was to try to prove some level of reliability, the researcher has to be aware that in some circumstances the reliability of a set of observations can be very high yet the observations themselves can be wrong.(Rossi et all, 1983) For example, if two different researchers ask members of the community if they are happy with the amount of community involvement solicited in FSI practices, and the researchers are perceived as representing that organization, it is likely that whether the respondent is satisfied or not, they will answer affirmatively. The issue as to wether the answers are true or not is a question of validity. Therefore the reliability issue lies within the broader area of validity.

Validity refers to the extent to which the data conform to the facts. The design of the research questions used in this research are based on other similar studies and on theoretical work concerning participatory evaluation. Tests of validity are empirical in nature and this study does not lend itself to such processes because the interviews were unstandardized. There is little comparison being done and there is no "causal relationship" or hypothesis being tested. Independent unstandardized interviews are varied and complex, making it difficult to develop a set of routine practices (Richardson, 1965). However, in order to reduce misunderstandings all interviews were reviewed and clarification was sought when necessary. In the case of observations, I attempted to verify my interpretations with people to ensure I had understood the situation correctly.

5.0 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AT THE FUNDACION SAN ISIDRO

5.1 Introduction

The betterment of people, their involvement in a democratic society, and their participation in the development of their own community are ideas that underlie the work of the FSI. It is the difference between working *for* people and working *with* people. There exists the belief that the *campesinos* of *Boyacá* can, with knowledge and opportunity create proactive approaches to changing the conditions in which they live. Change is not neutral and people approach change depending on their place in the social structure, their access to resources and their organizational skills. This belief is at the heart of the method in which the FSI determines who it works with and what form this work takes.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe community participation in the work of the FSI by focusing on the participatory practices employed by the FSI in their community work, as they relate to the three variables presented in the analytical framework: 1) community needs and the objectives of the community work; 2) basic change strategies; and 3) the FSI relationship to the community. It is critical to note that these three variables are closely linked and often overlap, especially in the case of community needs and objectives, and basic change strategies. Training, *formación* and research processes also often occur simultaneously.

5.2 Community Needs and Community Development Objectives

This thesis has adopted the social transformational model as the community development model utilized by the FSI. The underlying principle of the ST model, regarding community needs, is that needs be seen in terms of access to power and equality by an oppressed group. The key objectives of the community development work are consciousness raising, and structural change or power redistribution.

The questions raised in light of these two issues with regard to participation, are whether the pursuit of these principles occurs in the communities where the FSI works and to what degree, who is participating, and who is controlling or initiating this process. These questions need to be addressed as much at the community level as at the macro societal level.

5.2.1 Member Recruitment and Initiation of Programs

The FSI does not actively recruit people to become members nor does it approach communities with the aim of initiating programs. The impetus to engage in community work must be generated from community members. Often people approach the FSI for assistance in providing skill development for the purpose of income generation. Such was the case in *Vanega Norte, Vanega Sur and Pachaquira*. Once the FSI has been invited into a community, however, they become active members in the determination of what work and projects will be offered, and how this work will be carried out. *Formación* forms an integral part of all training programs and, therefore, community groups must agree to this component in order to receive training.

In other instances *campesinos* become involved in one of the government accredited training programs offered by the FSI. As a result of the process of training and consciousness raising, many return to their communities, and recruit others and begin community development processes there.

During a workshop of the IAMDP I asked promotores and staff how did the project originate. They claimed the idea was a natural result of the work done in the communities. They argued that unlike the RTD project, the specific goals for this new project were determined in consultation with community members and FSI staff. The project proposal was put together by the FSI but the idea came from months of consultation with community members.

The project steering committee is made up of twenty-four FSI members and several technical staff. In addition, there are research staff from the UJ who act in an advisory and training capacity as well as facilitate meetings.

There were several opportunities during the course of the research to talk to community members about this new project. Many had been consulted in the developing of objectives and that it reflected the work done in their communities over the past several years. In some cases, people knew little of the project. When I asked the steering committee as to this discrepancy they replied that the project was to be initially implemented only in those communities that had been involved in the project's development. What determined a community's participation was if they had completed enough research, analysis and *formación*, and had chosen the project as a plan of action they wished to engage in. For this reason communities such as the *Vanega Norte, Vanega Sur* and *Pachaquira* were not, at this point, involved.

5.2.2 *Formación*

Formación plays an integral role in all the work done by the FSI. All of the *promotores* and staff interviewed emphasized that while improving the material quality of life of the *campesinos* was important, the critical part of the community development process was for them to understand the structural causes of their poverty and the need to change those structures.

Many also claimed there was a need for *campesinos* to understand how they themselves, help to maintain these structures. "They must change their way of producing crops and the way they treat each other if they hoped to improve their communities," said a member of the *Asemblea*. One *promotor* typified this sentiment when he said, "if all the *campesinos* understood that they are the only ones who can improve their own lives, then half of our work would already be done. The fact is they don't, so we must engage them in the process of discovering this."

5.2.2.1 *Vanega Norte, Vanega Sur and Pachaquira*

Three, one day visits were made to each of these communities. At the time, the FSI had been working with these groups for over a year. Two members of the FSI who worked out of the farm *Esperanza*, were responsible for the training program. Normally the group would meet once a week spending about 60 percent of the time on training and 40 percent on *formación*. On average fifteen women participated in each community. In *Vanega Norte* one teenage boy also attended.

In the short time the FSI had been working with these groups of women, their sewing and knitting skills progressed quickly. Many had begun producing clothing for their family. The *formación*, however, was still in its initial stages.

Formación always begins with the reality of those involved and proceeds at a pace appropriate to the group. During the first meeting organized by the FSI, many of the women were too shy to speak and to even say their names. During my initial visit, for example, some of those present hid their faces behind their *ruanas*[34] the entire morning.

Research and analysis were carried out each week on issues such as the role of women in *Boyacá* society, the political and economic situation of *campesinos* and its relationship to poverty, the potential market for the goods they hoped to produce, political organization and the relationship of the state to its citizens. The discussions I witnessed did not include a detailed or profound analysis of the issues, but with each week participants began to make better connections between the issues and their lives.

One theme, initiated by the *promotores*, centred on the upcoming five hundredth anniversary of the landing of Columbus in the Americas. Information was exchanged regarding historical events and the effects of these events on the reality of the participants. For example, views on indigenous people were explored as was the evolution of the land tenure system. This discussion was consequential. Those present began to understand their own history and take greater pride in their cultural heritage. This is of importance, as those from *Boyacá* are often discriminated against because their physical features are more indigenous than people from other regions of the country.

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[34] *ruana* refers to the wool ponchos used by campesinos in Boyacá

The discussions I observed were significant, given the level of social analysis the group had when it began. One of the *promotores* related a story about the first time they discussed the Columbus theme. When she asked what geographic region Latin America referred to, many stated they had never heard the term nor had any knowledge of what countries bordered Colombia.

Initial identification of the issues addressed came from the *promotores,* but as the program progressed community members determined themes and priorities. Each week participants decided on tasks that they would complete for the next meeting. These included knitting or sewing, as well as research and analysis. The information gathered was presented to the group at each meeting for discussion, analysis and verification.

This process is not always community initiated and in fact appears somewhat coercive in that community members must engage in social analysis in order to receive training. *Promotores* and staff made no apologies for this. They claimed repeatedly that *campesinos* had never done any structured social analysis and if it took community members or *campesinos* from other regions to initiate this, then fine. What they also hastened to clarify was that the *formación* process and the type of analysis to be done was not predetermined. The purpose was to initiate the process recognizing it may take a long period of time before community control is achieved.

In the discussion with the participants it became clear that the more they learned the more interest was generated. One women explained that the deeper her social understanding the more her family, particularly her husband and neighbours either became interested, or became increasingly suspicious.

One key issue identified by all the people I talked with, was the recognition of the relationship between power and knowledge and how so many women in the community knew so little about what went on outside of their immediate community. They clearly understood how their power in the family was changing through their earning income. This increased power allowed them to bypass, in many instances, the male dominated community and family power structures. Husbands may not have liked the political changes amongst the women, but the income they generated gave them freedom to engage in the FSI training programs. The more money the women earned, the greater their political and social freedom. This process was clearly understood by all the women and served as a strong motivational factor to continue with the *formación* work.

When, during a group discussion in *Pachaquira*, they were asked if they felt they were participating fully and controlling the *formación* process, most admitted they still depended on the *promotores* for guidance and training. Slowly, however, they felt more in control. Said one older women,

> I can't read or write and I've never been any farther away from home than I could walk to and return, in the same day. I'm learning many new things and I have trouble understanding them. I hope the *promotores* don't leave for a while.

Some people spoke very little or said nothing during the time I spent in these communities. Some also seemed uninterested in the analytical work done. In response to this concern one *promotor* who had been working with the group in *Pachaquira* since the beginning said,

> Obviously we would like everyone to be involved and maybe some day they will be. We need to be patient, and even if they are never interested, at least they will learn how to sew and knit clothes for their families. No time spent here is wasted.

5.2.2.2 *Puebla*

The year leading up to my arrival at the farm had been a difficult one for those who had made the move to *Puebla*. Only two of the original families were still there. The others had returned to *El Rodeo*, unable to adjust to living in a new region and to working on a collective farm. It had been a year of learning about new farming practices, new ways of working with people, different living conditions and about the generations of family and friends who had lived with economic and social oppression. Said one young man,

> In the past year I have learned a great deal about the history and culture of my father and grandfather, and each day I am grateful that I will not have to spend the rest of my life living as they did and as I have done.

During my first visit, the group was involved in a day of ongoing analysis that began in *El Rodeo*. Two *promotores* were facilitating the discussion which centred on the causes of poverty in *El Rodeo* which eventually motivated those at the farm, to leave. This exercise was designed to identify obstacles and solutions faced not only by the group, but by all *campesinos*.

The participants identified several issues which created obstacles. The first related to what they called 'los grandes' (the big people), refering to the large land owners, credit institutions and government that all play a part in keeping the rural poor powerless.

They also identified selfishness and competitiveness among marginalized people as issues that help maintain these structures, and in effect perpetuate poverty among *campesinos*.

Another obstacle centred on land and water issues. They talked of the control of water by large landowners and how they never seemed to be able to produce enough each year to pay the *Caja Agraria*[35] credit institute, who were always raising interest rates and demanding payment regardless if farmers lost their crops or not.

Time was also dedicated to addressing issues faced in the day to day life of the group. The majority of the discussion on this day stemmed from the women in the group challenging the traditional gender roles. Women were equally involved in the agricultural work but still were responsible for preparing meals, cleaning and childcare. The men recognized this inequity but were only able to joke about doing some of this work. They had not made the move from understanding to action. The women decided they would present a new way of dividing work, to be discussed at the next meeting.

The next time the group met a rotational work schedule was submitted. After much discussion, the men agreed to assume some of the responsibility for cooking and cleaning. Childcare, they claimed, was something they already did. This 'experiment' was continuing at the time I left the area.

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[35] the *Caja Agraria* is the government credit institute set up to provide loans to the rural sector

5.2.2.3 Constitution Reform

The pursuit of community needs and objectives cannot only move unidirectional from the FSI to communities, but must also occur in reverse. Participation by community members in organizational decisions is critical given the tenets of the Social Transformational model.

The first day and a half of the three day workshop on national constitution reform was spent doing an analysis of the proposed constitutional changes, the change process itself, and how these changes would affect the lives of *campesinos* in *Boyacá*.

Participants were then broken into small groups with representation from each of the different regions. Each group was given a series of questions designed to guide discussion. A general plenary was then held which was facilitated by several FSI staff members.

The remainder of the second day was devoted to community work around the farm. At every gathering a certain amount of time is set aside for this work. As one of the founders of the FSI stated, " The sense of community that exists at the FSI is reflected in the ideology, attitudes, values and spirituality that guides our movement."

The final day was spent drafting recommendations that were to be sent to the Constitutional Assembly. These were to be signed by all those present. Photocopies of the recommendations were made for each participant so they could be shared with people from their communities. It was decided that workshops would be held in the communities of the participants explaining what had happened. Any new suggestions would be forwarded to the FSI to be re-directed to the Constitutional Assembly. These proposals became official FSI policy regarding constitutional reform.

The final part of the day was spent in evaluating the process. People felt the three days had been informative and empowering. One women said that while the people in the constitutional assembly may not pay any attention to their proposals, those who attended the workshop were at least now in a better position to understand the implications of changes. They could then plan strategies to either support, or fight the changes.

The final evening was spent celebrating the work that had been done and the chance for people to be together. It was during events such as this that the spirit of those who make up the organization became so clear. "Singing, dancing and having fun are as much a part of our struggle as are meetings and training" explained one staff member.

5.2.2.4 Evaluations

When discussing community needs and objectives it is necessary to analyze evaluation processes, both as a means of reflection on work that is being done, and as a determinant of future courses of action. The degree of community members' participation in evaluation aids in assessing the role they play in determining those needs and objectives.

The organizational structure (see Figure 4 in chapter two) of the FSI reflects the stated objective of maintaining community participation in all areas of work and decisions made. Members alleged that their input can go as far as changing the political and programatic direction of the organization.

During the latter part of my fieldwork I was fortunate to attend a general meeting of the *Asemblea*. Not only did this allow me access to some of the key and longest serving decision makers in the FSI, but it provided the opportunity to witness member participation in decision making. I had already observed decision making at the Executive Council level, but the *Asemblea* was the ultimate decision making body.

A discussion I had the first morning with one member set the tone for my observations. I asked her how community member input was ensured when the *Asemblea* made decisions. She turned to me and very politely said " and where do you think I and the others come from?" She and other members of the *Asemblea* explained that they are aware of the issues that are to be discussed well in advance of the meeting so that they could solicit community input. That is why the *Asemblea* only schedules four meetings per year.

In addition to regular FSI business, community concerns are discussed and options for solutions worked out. These alternatives are then taken back to communities for feedback. In some of the community and committee meetings I attended, issues the *Asemblea* was addressing were discussed, as were new concerns to be raised. This process was repeated until a decision was made.

It should be noted that in some instances the *Asemblea* made decisions based on the judgement of those present and without community consultation. This occurred if there was a need to make quick decisions, or if the process of making a specific decision was dragging out. In all cases, however, the decision was communicated to members, and was open to discussion and modification. Major changes to policy, however, only occured at general membership meetings.

At all meetings of the *Asemblea* one full day is dedicated to community work and activities, as well as personal, collective and organizational reflection.

5.3 Basic Change Strategies

There are two types of change strategies associated with the Social Transformational Model. The first incorporates the direct appropriation of social and political power. The second concentrates on the creation of an awareness among people that change is needed and possible, and to build action based on this awareness. This involves gaining access to power. For the FSI, this is best achieved through education, training and consciousness raising. Strategies focus on outcomes that are in accordance with the needs of the community and objectives of the community development projects, outlined earlier. They are process and action oriented.

Within the criteria outlined by the SA model, the community determines where it must start and what actions it must take. As in the case with community needs and objectives, it is necessary to look at change strategies at the individual and community level as well as how they relate to the larger society.

5.3.1 Training Courses

The FSI offers a wide range of training programs in agricultural production and marketing, forest management, community development, research, music and the arts, carpentry, traditional handicraft production, audio/visual technology, sewing and knitting. In addition, should a community group wish training in an area outside of FSI expertise, the FSI bring in outside instructors.

One of the cornerstones of their training program is the two year, government accredited agricultural technology course. This intensive course brings farmers to the main farm at *Duitama* for three weeks every three months for training in all aspects of organic agricultural production. The course also covers forest conservation as a means of controlling erosion and maintaining firewood supplies, agricultural marketing, nutrition and health care. Integral to the program, as well, is *formación*, where participants look at the root causes of the problems they face as agriculturalists. Topics such as the land tenure system, water rights and control of the agricultural market by agribusiness, amongst others, are covered at length.

The courses are practical in format although considerable classroom instruction is included. Community members and trainers agreed this was not what they called "*capacitación de salon*" or "classroom training."

Follow-up studies by the FSI, the UJ and government extension workers have shown an improvement in crop yield and quality, plus an increase in annual income among course graduates (Cartier and Alvarez, 1990). Studies have also shown a diffusion of knowledge and information from graduates to others in the region.

The families at Puebla, for example, received training in organic farming techniques, storage of crops, animal husbandry and seed selection, which they put into immediate practice. They received higher prices for their first crop of organically grown potatoes than did other farmers who used more chemically based production methods. This allowed them to buy new farm implements and reduce their dependency on the FSI. They also did not suffer illness as a result of poor handling techniques when working with pesticides and insecticides.

Community members, as part of any FSI program, also receive training in nutrition, food storage and conservation, preventative health care and basic first aid.

Many of the training courses were developed based on information derived from the RTD project and through community member directives. Many community members I interviewed said that health and nutrition, for example, has improved not only among those who received training, but among others in the community. Dissemination of information and skills is stressed in all courses.

5.3.2 Participatory Research

The FSI believes access to power comes from training, *formación* and research. This will prepare the *campesinos* of *Boyacá* for taking control over the decisions that affect their lives and give them the knowledge and skills to run their own affairs. Participatory Research, which combines training and research, is an integral part of the change strategy.

5.3.2.1 *Puebla*

One 2 day workshop I attended with the families at *Puebla* consisted of a political, social and economic analysis of the families in *El Rodeo*. The information gathered during a recent trip the families made to *El Rodeo* formed the basis of the analysis. They gathered information from as many members of the community as possible around 6 themes: 1) population; 2) economy; 3) issues around marketing; 4) land; 5) work; and 6) education and health. During the meetings preceding their departure the group, with the help of the *promotores*, identified a list of questions which would allow for the collection of appropriate information. This information could then be quantitatively analyzed with the help from staff of the UJ. The group was divided into 3 teams, each focusing on two themes.

Everyone had received training in research techniques such as participant observation and interviewing. However, many still felt quite uncomfortable talking to people and did not want to pry into traditionally sensitive areas. People equated the asking of personal questions with government or credit institutions representatives, both of whom *campesinos* tended to mistrust. The teams reported, however, little problem in gathering the information. They knew the majority of the people in *El Rodeo,* and many in the community were familiar with the FSI.

The information was reported back by teams and then opened for verification and discussion. Immediately an issue arose when attempting to determine the number of families in *El Rodeo,* stemming from an unclear definition of what a family consisted of. This is a critical issue as the provision of many government services are based on family size. After considerable discussion it was decided that they would base the number of families on the family unit regardless of how many lived in the same house. They would check to see how this matched with government figures.

Other information presented at the workshop included the numbers of elderly, youth and children in the community, the number of children attending school, the average size of farms, the key crops grown, their market value, the type of land tenure, forms of production, how crops were utilized and work patterns amongst those with land and those that are landless.

Information was often updated. At another meeting I attended in *Puebla*, information included in one of the *actas*[36] was being discussed and modified. Since the initial research into these results, the families from *El Rodeo* had done further research into the role of middlemen in the tobacco industry. They had done a more profound analysis and wished to change some of the information and add further details. Often material was changed repeatedly as more information became available.

At one meeting the discussion focused on why so many people left *El Rodeo* to work in other parts of the country or on the coffee plantations of Venezuela. Poor quality of the land, low tobacco prices, more work and better wages in Venezuela, and the urban migration of young women to the big cities to find work as maids in the homes of the middle class and the wealthy, were cited as major influences.

Several conclusions were drawn from this and subsequent workshops. First, the depth of which the community understood the root causes of their poverty was evident. People appeared quite clear in their analysis. They were also comfortable doing research and saw the relationship between it and the production of immediately useful knowledge that they themselves were able to generate. In an interview one women stated,

> as I learn more about the causes of the problems that I and my family faced in El Rodeo, I want to run back and tell others. I want to return home and do more research. I feel

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[36] acta refers to the recording of what has occurred in a meting, much like taking the minutes of a meeting.

> like I have more things to offer than just the work my hands do.

A concern I had resulting from these workshops, was the dependance that the participants had on the *promotores* for facilitating. I brought this up with the two *promotores* who, while acknowledged that my observation was correct, claimed this situation was not uncommon. Both said, as did other *promotores* in subsequent interviews, that to get *campesinos* to take control is a very slow process. As an explanation, one *promotor* said

> we cannot expect to reverse centuries of subjugation in a short period of time. The fact that this group has come so far so quickly is incredible. There are others (i.e. *Pachaquira*) in which it took until the third or fourth meeting to get people to say their names. If we need to provide the motivation and keep the process going so be it. After all I was exactly like these people only a few years ago.

When I brought this same theme up with the families they recognized their dependence but felt they were assuming more control all the time. They never spoke of the FSI treating them in a paternalistic fashion.

On another occasion I remained with a small group of women responsible for the preparation of meals that day. We discussed the difficulties they had experienced in the transition from their lives in *El Rodeo* to life here.

All agreed that the decision to leave *El Rodeo* was relatively simple. "There was no reason to stay" said one women. The decision to leave, however, left the *promotores* from the FSI in a awkward position. While they had no right to challenge the decision, the question of where they would go created difficulties. The people, some of which were members of the *Asemblea*, asked that they present their case at the next

Asemblea meeting. The end result of a lengthy process was the negotiation of the conditions under which 10 hectares of land at Puebla would be made available to those from *EL Rodeo*, and who from the community would that be.

The process of adaptation was difficult. Small land owners accustomed to working their own land, were suddenly obliged to work cooperatively using organic farming techniques. It was difficult for people who pride themselves on being hard working independent workers, to be dependent on someone for food and seed. It was also hard to leave family, friends and the only place they had ever lived.

One evening I asked several people what PR meant to them. The resulting discussion proved quite provocative. Some of the teens had no idea what PR meant. In fact, only those that had been involved in the process for several years were familiar with the term. What transpired was a detailed explanation by some of the people. It was surprising that while most were unfamiliar with the term all understood the process.

When I asked the *promotores* why people were unfamiliar with the term, the reaction was one of indifference. One *promotor* claimed that she didn't really know herself exactly what it was but as in the case of the others, she clearly understood the process involved.

The reaction from those who were well versed in PR was that while they do not avoid using the term, often *campesinos* are suspicious of academic terms and concepts. What is important, according to one promotor, "...is not the term. One can explain and use the process and call it whatever they want. What is important is that everyone understands what is being done and why." Those from *El Rodeo* talked at length about the feeling of empowerment[37] they had as they better understood their own reality and the effect that existing social structures have on it. They felt the move to *Puebla*, while difficult, was their decision. One man who had worked with the FSI for several years, stated that with all the difficulties he had experienced in adapting to their collective lifestyle, he never forgot that it was his decision to leave. "I never would have considered making such a decision prior to doing the social analysis that I and others had had done over the last few years."

While evaluation occurs at all stages of the PR process, a formal evaluation process is done at the end of every meeting and workshops. There also are periodic evaluation workshops organized in each community throughout the year. Successes, failures, community processes and individual participation are all evaluated. People are responsible to develop personal plans of actions designed to improve problem areas. These are recorded and periodical assessments are done to determine progress and to modify action plans if necessary.

5.3.2.2 The RTD Project

The RTD program spanned over five years with meetings occuring almost every month between staff from the UJ and the *promotores* doing the community work. Two principle processes occured simultaneously: 1) the training of *promotores* in PR; and 2) the implementation of the PR process in the communities by the *promotores*. The responsibility of the promotores was to: 1) ensure the research was completed, which took the form of tasks and assignments to be carried out between meetings; and 2) train and involve interested community members in PR.

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[37] there is much use (and misuse) of the term empowerment in recent discussions concerning community development and social change. After a lengthy discussion concerning the meaning of empowerment or apoderamiento , community members form *El Rodeo* decided it refered to people being involved in making the decisions that affect their lives.

The process of carrying out the research in the communities was formidable. At first community members were distrustful. Both *Promotores* and community members attributed this to the project being FSI initiated. In addition, the work often took place independent of direct community involvement in either the original idea of the project, or in its design and implementation. People began doing research without either going through the established local political structures or even explaining what it was they were doing. In retrospect, many of those involved in the research said they should have moved slower in the initial stages until community members were aware of their intentions.

Some of those who were interviewed confessed that most community members and even some of the *promotores* didn't understand the PR process very well. Implementing a research project was a large undertaking. Many said the work happened too fast at the community level for it to be of direct use to the community members.

Several other problems surfaced during the initial stages of the project. The UJ staff felt it was important that community members analyze and validate the data collected by the *promotores*. This allowed people to validate their own experience in a clear and articulate manner, as well as to ensure everyone had the same information. However, in reality, many community members and even *promotores*, were either uninterested or lacked the sophistication to critically analyze the data. A detailed review of the *actas* was not possible as many were missing. This made it difficult to determine whether the assignments were completed or not, and to what extent they were successful.

An important issue was the varied amounts of time it took to do the work in different communities. These differences were further accentuated when it was recognized that *promotores* had to ensure community members understood what the project was about before continuing with data collection. It was this insight that entrenched the need for community members to understand why they were doing things and that everything was decided and evaluated according to community standards and rhythms. The key, claimed one women, was to allow the process to evolve naturally according to the skills of the *promotores* and community members, and based on the natural progression of the individual communities:

> We must respect the values, attitudes and histories of everyone involved; staff, promotores, community members and the communities. Each community works according to its own rhythm and that rhythm must be respected regardless of our sense of urgency. We must remember that we are learning at the same time we are doing. None of us have university degrees in research or community development but we know our own lives or only we can be the ones to change it.

The skill of the *promotores* in research, analysis and group animation vastly improved over the duration of the project. However, there was general consensus among those interviewed and through the review of evaluations, that no tangible change in people's lives resulted from the RTD project. Nevertheless, the exercise generated a significant amount of scientific information. This information is reflected in the types of training courses developed and in the community development practices of the FSI. The project also increased the profile of the FSI in *Boyacá* and served to recruit new members and *promotores*. Perhaps most importantly though, were the lessons learned and how they would be reflected in new projects.

5.3.2.3 The IAMDP Project

This project, from its inception, utilized a Participatory Research process. Through the integration of empirical knowledge gained from the community, the training of community members and the involvement of the FSI and the UJ, the object is to develop alternative solutions to these issues addressed through the project objectives. The process of PR was designed to contribute to the autonomy and independence of the community through the analytical and technical skills they would learn during the course of the project.

The research process has four phases which, in many instances, occur at the same time. These are:

1) training in PR in order to create the bases for more independence
2) the production of knowledge in which the external researcher has the opportunity to learn along with the objects of the study
3) the return and diffusion of the knowledge produced
4) the development of specific activities by community members that lead to the transformation of their reality.

The clearly articulated action component of the project constitutes a key difference between this project and the RTD, which was primarily concerned with better understanding the reality of the *minifundista*. Action is integrated into the program both at the technical level and in *formación* level, as part of the PR process.

Data collection also includes traditional research methods. *Promotores* and interested community members learn and understand how each methods is used and why, as well as what is to be done with the information. There will be fifteen, two-day workshops at the main farm in *Duitama* and a further fifteen, two-day workshops at each of the zonal farms.

Promotores receive training in specific areas such as indigenous methods for conserving and storing foodstuffs and the growing of new crops appropriate to each of the zones. This consists of twelve, three-day workshops at the main farm in *Duitama* and a further twelve, three-day workshops in each of the zonal farms with *promotores* from the region. Fifteen additional workshops totalling seventy-two days will be organized dealing with nutrition, baking, food and health related issues as well as marketing, farm management and the use of appropriate technology.

PR serves as a conscious process of critical assessment and of activity for those involved. However, as stated in the proposal,

> PR also must be done with the same scientific rigor as any other form of research. This means that those engaged in the research must gain the specialized skills in order to meet these strict requirements. (Fundación San Isidro, 1990. p.6)

5.3.2.4 Evaluations

At the end of each workshop a detailed evaluation took place. The areas of discussion centred on new knowledge acquired and the quality and support given to and received from members of the group. A critical look at participation, both of group members and of people in the communities, was also included. In addition, an analysis was done on PR processes and on strategies aimed at increasing community members participation in all levels of the project.

The final evaluative component was aimed at the people themselves. People found much of their motivation in scripture, and taking ample time for individual and collective reflection was as important as any other component of their work. It was an opportunity for people to express how they felt in general, and to discuss the meaning their work had on their lives and the lives of those they worked with.

5.4 FSI-Community Relations

In the Social Transformational model worker-community relations range from a horizontal mutual learning role to one of directive educator. In either case the community worker must respect community members and facilitate the process of consciousness raising within the socio-political reality of the community. This same relationship exists between the researcher and community members in a Participatory Research process.

The following discussion will focus on FSI-community relations with special attention directed towards relations between the communities and the *promotores*. In addition, the relationships between the UJ and the FSI, and between the FSI and an external funding body, will be explored.

5.4.1 The Role of the *Promotores*

The role of the *promotores* is the most crucial in the community work done by the FSI. They provide training, carry out research and often represent the interests of the communities in the workings of the organization and conversely, represent the organization in the communities. Their role and their community relations are, according to the Executive Director, "the blocks upon which the entire organization is built on."

While staff often accompany *promotores* in order to provide specific training to community members, or to act as advisors, it is the *promotores* that carry out the majority of the work. They maintain contact with community groups, provide consistency in the work and are most responsible for the *formación* component of the community work.

There is no detailed outline of how *promotores* are recruited. All must be FSI members and must complete several training courses in research, group building and animation, *formación,* facilitating meetings and conflict resolution. In some instances, however, community members were acting as *promotores* although they had received little training in the required skills and responsibilities. In other cases it appeared that if someone from a community wished to act as a *promotor* and liaison with the FSI, then that was sufficient criteria. Training would follow. Discussions with staff and management concurred that this was sometimes the case. They believed that if someone showed interest, that interest needed to be exploited. They also were cognizant that if there was only one person from a community that was willing to do the work, then few options existed.

The vesting of so much power with the *promotores* was not without its problems. Some FSI board members acknowledged the potential for abusing that power. However, *promotores* argued that they considered themselves to be representatives of the communities and their region because they come from those same communities. Therefore, for them relations with the communities was not an issue.

There also existed the possibility that information exchanged between communities and the FSI was not accurately being transmitted. This could result in misunderstandings leading to further complications. The need for training *promotores* and clarifying their roles and responsibilities was paramount, according the FSI staff.

One of the staff who had worked for many years in community development through the church "*comunidad de base*"[38] program was also critical of FSI-community relations. Fundamental to community work, they believed, was the need to live, share and become part of the community. It is imperative that *promotores* work daily with community members.

The FSI does not work in this manner. While *promotores* do their community work in their own communities and regions, they do not work full time. Most work on the family farm in addition to their community work responsibilities. What was necessary, according to this person, was to have paid full time *promotores* rather than doing the work piecemeal.

This view was echoed by a Colombian organization that was hired by an FSI external funding body from Holland, to evaluate the impact of FSI community work. The principle evaluator believed the FSI could be more effective if they paid the *promotores*. In the communities the evaluator would ask *promotores* if they would be more effective if they were paid and working full time. In all cases I observed *promotores* did not agree. This is best captured in the response of one *promotor* when they answered, "why should I be paid for being involved in the development of my own community?"

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[38] *Comunidades de base* refer to the base community work done by churches in Latin America. These church follow the teachings of liberation theology

There was also the assertion by some people that real power was too centralized. Community members could not realistically do things on their own. *Promotores*, it was argued, were even more tied down and could not make community decisions without going through the FSI 'bureaucracy". Communities, they argued, should make decision based on their own reality and that while the FSI promotes just that, it really, controls most of those decisions. Community members are forced to buy into the FSI 'ideology and vision'.

A number of those interviewed retorted by saying that only those that believe in what the FSI does need become members, and that community groups can change the direction of the organization through the democratic structures that exist. They also insisted that *promotores*, in conjunction with community members, are free to make decisions they believe best reflect their interests and needs.

Those who are critical claim this is much easier said than it is to operationalize. The FSI, they attest, suffers from what most organizations do, namely that decisions are controlled by those who formally or informally carry more power (i.e. founding members, staff, community leaders). Intentional or not, this is often the case.

5.4.2 Training *Promotores* in Participatory Research: The RTD and IMADP Projects

In the IMADP project clear components were laid out for the training of *promotores* in Participatory Research. Everyone must attend a two day training workshop held every two months focusing on research skills. Two staff from the UJ had the primary responsibility of facilitating workshops and training the steering committee which was made up of the various constituent groups. Many of the members of the FSI who have experience in PR were heavily relied upon not only to carry out community work, but in the training of newer *promotores* and some of the technical staff.

As described earlier in this chapter the research has four phases. It is through the *promotores* that this process will be implemented, as they have direct contract with the communities. The primary tool in carrying out the research is through the use of *tareas*[39] and *actas*.

5.4.2.1 *Tareas*

The process of moving from the theoretical to the practical occurs partially through the extensive use of *tareas*, which also serve as part of the data collection process. As in the case of the RTD project, specific *tareas* are assigned to all members of the research team which are to be completed between each session. Results are presented and discussed at each meeting. The data is then turned over to staff from the UJ who are responsible for organizing it and performing any of the more complicated statistical work.

It is through this work that the *promotores* are able to practice what they have learned, advance the research process, compile information and verify data. They also initiate community member participation in both the research and the direction this research is to take. They gain expertise in data collection and interpretation, and improve their research skills.

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[39] tareas refer to tasks or assignments to be carried out by promotores between meetings and workshops

The *tareas* are also instrumental as an evaluative tool. They aid in assessing outcomes and the impact of the work. One example of this concerned the effectiveness of the health care training programs offered by the FSI. Information had been collected during the RTD project on the numbers of visits made by community members to health care facilities, and on mortality rates. In the new project *promotores* collected information regarding these same issues in communities where health care programs had been offered. They found a decrease in the mortality rate and less visits to health care facilities. This was the result of improved sanitation processes and the ability of many to treat minor illness themselves.

Observations showed that the *tareas* are a key instrument in establishing and maintaining contact with community members. They allowed the *promotores* to ensure that the various aspects of the project involve community members and were reflective of their needs and views.

Tareas are also a central component of the *diagnóstico*. In addition to shedding light on the realities faced in the communities, they facilitate the discovery of potential ways of transforming their situation.

Continuity between community meetings is also facilitated through the use of the *tareas*. The *promotores*, and those they are working with, are in a continual process of discovering their own reality and the reality of other regions. As stated in the project proposal

> The researchers that belong to the investigating group, move back and forth from being both the subject and object of the research. It is necessary that a simultaneous process of training occur in which the researcher passes on sufficient skills and elements of the research process to the group, so that they can assume their responsibilities and hence become both researchers and the objects of the research.

Said one *promotor*:

> I find myself learning so much both at the training sessions and in the communities. While I am helping other to understand, they are also helping me to understand. I offer training in new skills and in return I learn other. Often the *promotor*/community members distinction gets a bit blurry. I have to continually remind myself of my role.

The evaluation of *tareas* at each group meeting advances the research process in terms of the amount and quality of information gathered, as well as improving the research and animation skills of the *promotores*.

Prior to one meeting I attended, *promotores* were given the task of returning to the communities with community members to carry out specific research *tareas*. The information was to be presented at the meeting and then given to the UJ staff for quantitative analysis. The information collected centred on basic demographics, health issues and agricultural production.

During the presentation of what was collected the group began to analyze not only the data but issues surrounding its collection. Most found few difficulties collecting the data, but concern arose around what was to be done with it and how to make the process meaningful to community members. Many reported community people being sceptical about the work. One man raised the concern of how little action resulted from all the research they did during the RTD program. Others claimed that while the *promotores* came from the region and often from the community itself, they only collected information and offered no solutions to issues raised. They also stated the *promotores* were not very interesting and didn't seem to motivate people very well.

As alluded to in the discussion concerning the RTD project, there were problems associated with the carrying out of the *tareas*. This concern was paramount given the focus the IMADP project has on action. Some were also concerned by the difficulty in training the younger *promotores* around PR processes. Their age and lack of animation skills impeded the implementation of the program.

This raised a number of questions such as; How effective is the *formación* component? What is the role of action in the PR process? What is the responsibility of the *promotores* and the FSI in guiding the process and providing solutions? Do they possess the skills to carry out their tasks? Are communities really bought into this process?

When these questions were posed to community members and to FSI people, responses varied. Some acknowledged there were problems with the training of *promotores* in community development processes. They qualified this by emphasizing that training *promotores* was at the same time training community members. They also recognized that little concrete action occured as a result of the RTD but pointed out that much had had been learned since the RTD. Training programs and community development practices have improved during the last eleven years since they started the RTD program.

5.4.2.2 *Actas*

Detailed *actas* or minutes of each meeting and workshop, are kept. This enhances the ability to maintain accurate records of the research, and to instill in team members the need for scientific rigor in their research methodology. Included in the *actas* are data results, workplan proposals, suggestions for modification of these and previous workplans, comments about assigned *tareas*, lectures or assigned readings, and any observations that help to give vision to the group. These minutes are not just a record of project proceedings, but form part of the research reports.

Information derived from the research is collected at the workshops. In addition, the results from information collected at the previous meeting are distributed and discussed. This allows people to validate or highlight discrepancies in the information. People also discuss how this information is to be disseminated to communities so that it can be validated or modified.

The focus on validating information was highlighted in all the meetings I attended at *Duitama*. For example, during the first morning of the initial workshop I attended, time was spent going over the *acta* from the last meeting. The information was shared and discussed and several changes were made as a result of meetings the *promotores* had with members of the community. The process took the whole morning and demonstrated the importance placed on verifying the information gathered and recorded.

An analysis of *actas* ocurred at meetings with both the planning team and with community members. It was part of training people in research methods. Equally important, it provided community members the opportunity to validate and maintain control over the integrity of the information. The work, though tedious and slow, was seen by all as a key element in having community members control their own knowledge production and ultimately, their development process.

The explanation of data results to community members was a slow and often frustrating process. They had been involved in the collection of the data and were keenly interested in the results. Community members that were interviewed understood that the purpose of collecting the data was to better understand the reality in order to build action plans. However, the data had to be presented in a way that was meaningful to them. One of the principle methods for communicating information was the use of audio/visual aids such as posters describing health statistics or through theatre. Although the materials were not long lasting, they were easily accessible. The information was also recorded in a more formal report format.

5.4.2.3 Evaluations

As mentioned, evaluation is instrumental in FSI community work. Initially the UJ facilitators stressed, as part of the evaluative process, the need for written evaluative reports as a tool for developing action plans. However, for an evaluative report to be 'action-oriented' it must be in a form that is easy to understand and use. During training, the facilitator worked on developing the *promotores* confidence in producing such reports and how they can help communities to do the same. Some promotores who had done this found the process to be lengthy, complex and somewhat incomprehensible. Few community members were interested in them. It was decided, therefore, that an in-depth evaluation workshop would be held where information could be shared and discussed. A short synopsis of this meeting could then be distributed. This was carried out at the completion of workshops and community meetings as described earlier in this discussion.

5.5 The FSI and External Organizations

The FSI and the UJ have worked together for many years. The founding members of the FSI first approached UJ researchers to discuss initiating a PR project. They were interested in embarking on a detailed research study of the areas in *Boyacá* where they worked. They wanted to gather information that would help them better understand the region. This, they hoped, would help them improve their community development work. They had read about PR and were 'intrigued' by the ideals of the methodology.

The role of the UJ researchers has always been to train community members, in this case FSI staff and *promotores*, in research theory and methods. While PR acts as the methodological umbrella, other research methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, are incorporated. The UJ researchers have also been responsible for compiling the information gathered, and to do the more advanced statistical analysis. FSI people have never been particularly interested in learning statistics. They are interested, however, in learning how to interpret the data.

It was never the role of the UJ nor were they permitted to go into the communities themselves either to initiate or oversee the research. This role was left to the FSI. It avoided issues raised by outsiders entering communities and meant that FSI members would gain research skills.

The FSI adapted PR to fit its own needs. For example, there exists a fundamental difference in the way the two organizations define PR. The UJ staff, while encouraging an action component, do not feel it is their role to pressure the FSI to incorporate specific actions as part of the PR process. One UJ staff person who was involved in the RTD program said:

> The responsibility for action lies with the FSI. It is not ours nor do we think it is necessary. The role of PR is to have people do their own scientific research into the forces that affect them. Whether this results in action is, while preferred, irrelevant

For those at the FSI, on the other hand, the entire purpose for doing this research is to eventually initiate a process of transformation. "Why do research if it isn't to make change?" asked one *promotor*.

Defining the role of the external change agent is another area where UJ staff differ from many who support PR processes. Some, such as Fals Borda, argue external change agents must adopt the struggles of those they are working with. However, as one staff member commented,

> I'm not a *campesino* from *Boyacá* and frankly I don't want to become one. Why should I pretend to be what I am not. I am a university educated women from *Bogotá*. It's ridiculous to even think I could be something I can't.

The best delineation of the relationship between the two organizations is detailed in the IAMDP proposal,

> Participatory research is conceived by the participants, as researchers and as those being researched. All are active subjects and benefit from the process. The traditional paradigm whereby the external professional carries out all phases of the research, is broken. However, each of these groups have different roles. The external researchers are never the subjects and never are part of the researched reality. They, therefore, never determine what are the problems nor alternative solutions. Rather they act as external agents that serve to support, not determine, the activities of the investigating group (Fundación San Isidro, 1991)

The FSI also has a long history of receiving funding from church based, non-governmental organizations from Holland, Canada and Italy. As is often the case with reliance on external funding, recipient organizations are obliged to implement programs that, in part, reflect the objectives of those organizations.

The FSI has had positive relations with the organizations that provide it with funding. While these organizations have the right to evaluate both the proposals and the actual programs, the FSI has never modified its work in order to meet requirements outlined by external agencies. They have, in fact, refused money rather than adapt programs to meet needs other than those of their constituents.

In recent years, access to external funds has been increasingly problematic due to the shrinking budgets and resource bases of these organizations. This has acted as an impetus for the FSI to look closely at becoming financially more self-sufficient through activities such as increasing agricultural production at the farms as a means of generating income.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This research has described how community member participation occurs in the community development practices of the FSI. By examining the role of participation in the areas of community needs and objectives, basic change strategies and FSI-community relations, the data have shown that the FSI approach to participation in community development embodies many of the principles outlined in the Social Transformational Model.

6.2 Major Findings

The purpose of the community development work done by the FSI is to fundamentally alter the social structures that keep the *minifundista* culture impoverished. They do not enter into a community ideologically free nor do they actively recruit people to become members.

It is through technical training and an understanding of the social forces that act upon the *campesinos* of *Boyacá*, that the necessary changes will occur. To this end, they provide training to communities in areas such as agricultural production and marketing, and nutrition and health in order to support them in improving their lives. To create awareness, programs of *formación* and Participatory Research are carried out so that people may better understand why they are in their current situation and how to develop action plans designed at change.

The questions of who and how communities participate are central to FSI methods. In order for people to gain the skills and confidence needed to enact change, community members maintain control over the type of work they do. Community processes are based on the needs and rhythms at which individual communities move. Members decide the direction which guides the organization. They are key decision makers in all aspects of community work and at all levels of the organization. They not only receive information but produce it. Community participation is not only solicited but required, and respect is shown for a community's values, beliefs and understanding of their own reality regardless of how well they can articulate this.

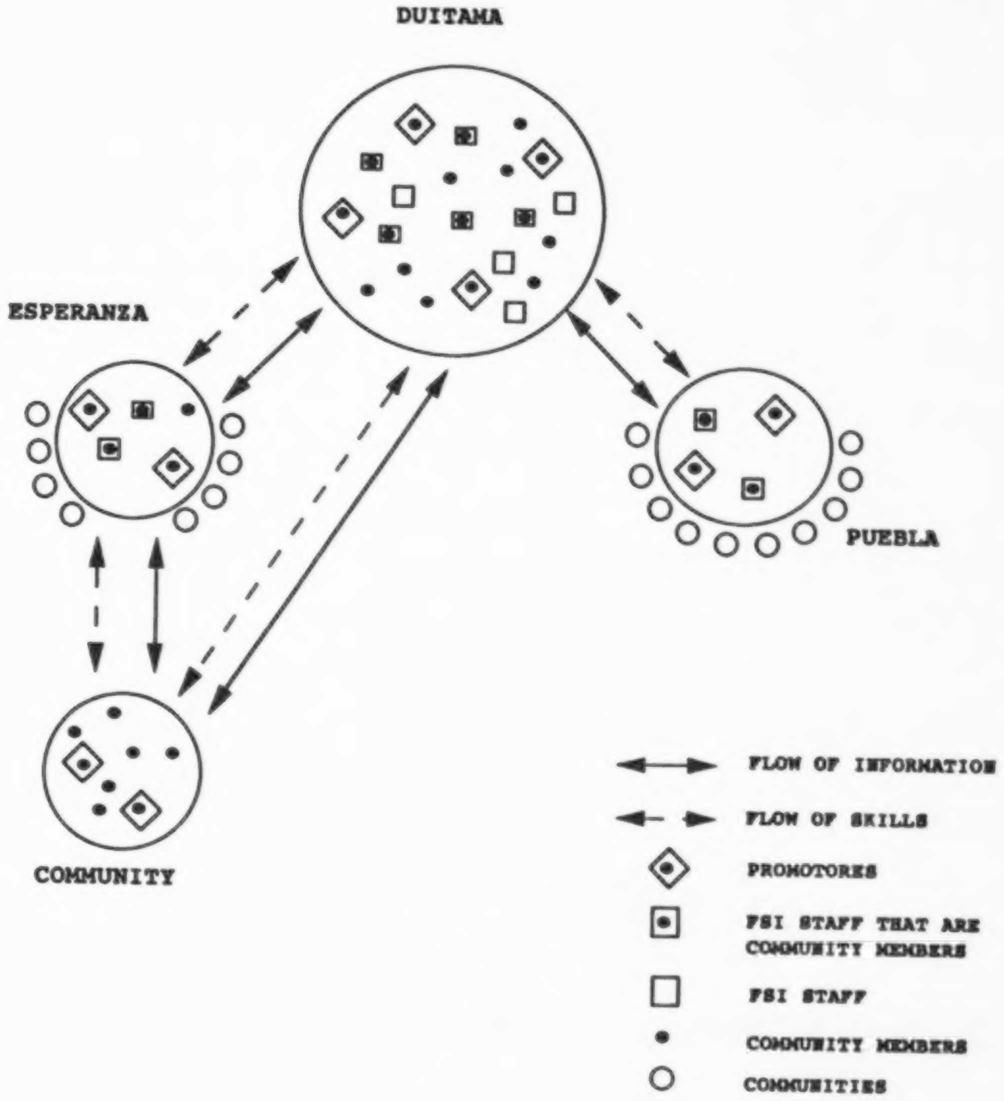
Figure 7 describes the major community development processes used in the work done by the FSI. It shows the flow of skills and information between all those involved in FSI programs. At the centre of this flow are three key sets of relationships that directly influence and determine levels of participation. These are: 1) the FSI and the community; 2) the promotores, as both individuals and representatives of the FSI, and the communities; and 3) the FSI and the promotores.

The FSI may work with large sectors of the community or only with several families. My initial reaction was that, in most cases, the programs only served a small number and did not reflect the 'whole community'. The FSI does not measure its effectiveness based on the numbers of people involved. They are more concerned with the level of understanding and commitment to change. What was critical was the quality of participation, not how many were involved.

The assumption that community members understand the various forces that affect their lives and what they must do to change them, is not made by the FSI. To believe people want complete control of the community development process in unfounded. FSI community workers do not

FIGURE 7

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES AT THE FUNDACION SAN ISIDRO


DUITAMA
ESPERANZA
PUEBLA
COMMUNITY
FLOW OF INFORMATION
FLOW OF SKILLS
PROMOTORES
FSI STAFF THAT ARE COMMUNITY MEMBERS
FSI STAFF
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
COMMUNITIES

assume that from the onset they are involved in clearly delineated transformative community development processes. Most community members have little awareness of the oppressive forces that manipulate them. They are simply trying to reach the point where they have some land and a minimal amount of livestock.

Many community developers propose processes which integrate community participation into the planning process (Chadwick, 1971; Roberts, 1974). D. M. Conner (1972), for example, has developed a planning model which integrates participation in all phases regardless of what institution or government agency initiates the process. It is based on the assumption that in order for a planning excercise to be an accurate process and in order for it to be successful, participation is a necessary and integral part of the process.

All these models involve public participation during various parts of the process, but are inevitably agency or institutionally initiated and controlled. Participation is pre-determined and the reality of the community and those in it, must conform to the artificial planning model thrust upon it. The question remains as to whether external change agents actually enhance their authority and dominance by creating an illusion of participatory relationships in the community development process.

The work the FSI does, while not in contradiction with what the above authors support, has a different ideological point of departure. The notion of a clearly laid out planning process with fixed phases and time periods already dictates participation and limits participant control. The process and the agenciew who initiate and control it, are clearly willing to share the responsibility of the project or process but are more reticent to share real power.

Participatory Research is used as a method of collecting information, as the guiding framework under which traditional research takes place, and as a principle tool in the *formación* process. It both questions the fundamental motivations upon which traditional quantitative research is based but then utilizes its techniques. What is consistent is the overall commitment to participation within it, and the role it plays in the social objectives that the FSI pursue. The PR process involves both *formación* and data collection. The two are inextricably connected.

I found the particaptory practices of the FSI to be continually evolving. Staff, *promotores* and community members put ideas in to practice, made mistakes and then modified their work.

The organization is not without problems and contradictions. However, unlike community projects designed under the principles of the Self-Help and Technical Assistance approaches, the FSI does not view community development as merely a series of activities to be implemented in a community. It is important when discussing the participatory practices of the FSI to place them within the general community work and social action context in which they work. While individual community projects must be evaluated based on the results they achieve, it is impossible, as Ornelas (1992) states "to assess community and regional dynamics with a single action or project phase (p.54).

There is little distinction between community life and the community development programs of the FSI. For their members, all facets of what goes on in a community are either directed at change or serve to maintain unjust structures. The work they do demonstrates the need to cease viewing community development as separate from people's everyday lives.

It would not be accurate to imply that there is total participation among community members with whom the FSI works with. As shown by the data, many were only marginally involved in the community work. A significant proportion were passive participants in the PR process, serving only as subjects of the research. They did little research and often did not understand the point of what was being done. They were often more concerned with vocational skill development such as agriculture or knitting. It was the *promotores* that played the key role. People often had to be encouraged to participate.

Much of the relationship between the FSI and the communities occurs through the *promotores*. While the FSI rightly points out that *promotores* are representatives of the communities, it seems as though a great deal of authority is invested in these people. While there is the opportunity for misrepresentation, the decision making and community development process used by the FSI have a built in monitoring system. Information must go from the community to the FSI and then the decisions made based on that information must be, in turn, be ratified by the community members. In addition, when major policy decisions are being made, representatives from the communities, as demonstrated in several of the examples given in the previous chapter, are included[40].

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[40] the reader will recall that one of the principle reasons for the length of time between Asemblea meetings is because of the time needed for community consultation.

Some of those interviewed felt the *promotores* lacked the necessary animation and research skills. In many instances I, too, found this to be the case. However, these people are in a process of acquiring skills at the same time they are implementing projects. Learning and doing happen simultaneously.

The *promotores* that work in the individual communities on a continuing bases are people from those, or neighbouring communities. They are continually shifting between being the facilitator of the community processes and being a member of it. Having *promotores* come from the community clearly impacts the commitment they have to the community development work they do. They are, in effect, helping to orchestrate their own social change.

The *formación* process begins with the level of analysis of the community members. It is then modified by both the community worker and community members. Each process I observed was unique and progressed at the rhythm comfortable to those involved. There was no development formula that fit all communities. There was only a commitment to working with the people in a manner appropriate to that particular situation. While the *formación* process aims at allowing for as much community control as possible, it does not imply that whatever the community does is legitimate.

The worker-community relation allowed for two-way learning as it does in all three relationships highlighted at the beginning earlier in this chapter. Through joint collaboration and an open two-way flow of information, both change agents and recipients learn. Through collaborative efforts and even trial and error, all those concerned are involved in growth and development.

6.3 Conclusions

The extent to which opportunities for participation are taken is largely preconditioned by processes of socialization. Differences between the apathetic and the involved community member are acquired rather than inherited. People become politically socialized and learn certain attitudes, skills and behaviors while reject or fail to experience others. The socialization process occurs within the environmental context of each person's existence, and their response to situations will influence their learning process and their future action in similar situations.

Participation-related socialization is very complex and more extensive than simply motivation or competence and is certainly inclusive of a person's personality development. What remains critical is that the opportunities for participation and control in all facets of organizational decision making, remain open to community involvement.

Successful participatory practices do not refer only to the number of people in a community that are involved, but rather the nature of their participation. Thus a major objective of the study has been to demonstrate the need for understanding the nature of people's participation in their own community development work. Only then can the success of that work be assessed.

Several criteria for social change strategies are highlighted through the FSI experience. First, an awareness must be developed that social development, with all its implications, is a slow process and that often it involves some sort of a reversal of a historical process.

The information produced through an analysis of data collected or as a result of *formación* is unlikely to be uniformly distributed within or across communities. Different groups may very well develop different kinds of information depending on their particular circumstance. In addition, the use of any new information or awareness produced by a community requires specific forms of societal organization and intervention if the interests of the community are to be adopted. Secondly, contextual circumstances are important factors to be constantly taken into consideration when conducting intensive processes for the creation of new social structures, collective values and community based power. Finally adoption of local development is essential. This implies a remodelling of the social environment, as all its associated structures, and presupposes the struggle to increase levels of economic self-sufficiency and political autonomy through community control over decision making processes.

The participatory practices of the FSI are consistent with the theory which guided this research. Their work must be placed in the greater social transformational context which guides it. However, the way in which the FSI works and the goals they strive towards demonstrate that they act as much as a social movement as they do a community development organization. The organization is, however, structured much like an agency. It would be beneficial to the FSI if future research studies used social movement literature and theory to assess their participatory practices.

This thesis focused its assessment of participation on the nature of participation and how the various constituent groups were involved in the operations of the FSI. It was limited to collective participation in the organizational structure, decision-making and community development practices. It did not address, in detail, the level of individual community member participation nor their motivation for involvement. Research into these areas would also be of benefit to the FSI and other similar agencies or movements.

Perhaps what I learned most through this exercise occured to me as I reread the literature critical of Participatory Research. Criticism was directed at PR as a methodology, as a research paradigm and in its views as what constitutes knowledge and who has the right to produce it. The majority of the authors neglected to look at the key issue surrounding its use; that is as a model or paradigm for understanding the forces and structures that negatively act upon our lives with the aim of changing them. They neglect to address the relationship that social theory and the research done, have to the practices that result from it and the effect these practices have on the lives of people. Even some of the work done in support of PR exists at a level detached from those it seeks to influence.

The staff, *promotores*, members and those from the communities that make up the FSI cared little for the intellectual jousting that occurs amongst academics. They see the process as one of producing the knowledge, skills and consciousness needed for them and those they work with to move out of the repressive reality in which they live. If the knowledge produced is of use to those who seek transformation from oppression, then that is where lies the legitimacy of the SA model and PR, regardless of the arguments for or against it.

Development and social change result from a long process of experimentation and innovation through which people build their skills, knowledge and self-confidence. These are all necessary to shape their environment in ways which foster progress towards goals such as economic growth, equity in income distribution and political freedom. At root then, development is about processes of enrichment, empowerment and participation. At present the technocratic, project oriented view of the world has trouble, or chooses not, to accommodate such principles. The poor can help in constructing our understanding of the way in which their world operates.

The FSI works hard in its struggle to overcome the forces that keep people oppressed. They have spent over a decade working in a manner which they hope one day, will lead to this fundamental change they speak of. They make mistakes and they learn. However, these people are part of a movement. Regardless of the conditions in which they find themselves, they continue their work without violence and with respect and dignity.

6.4 Concluding Statement

I began this process with the objective of learning about participation in community development and in organiational decision making.. I hoped to support the belief I have that with the knowledge and skills everyone can be involved in improving their lives and the lives of others. In the process of doing this research I found hope and I found determination among the people I encountered. I learned from those that many believe have nothing to teach. I found people and structures that represent one small and peaceful step towards a just world.

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